

LES
BOURGEOIS
DE LA COMPAGNIE
DU
NORD-OUEST

RÉCITS DE VOYAGES, LETTRES ET RAPPORTS INÉDITS RELATIFS
AU NORD-OUEST CANADIEN

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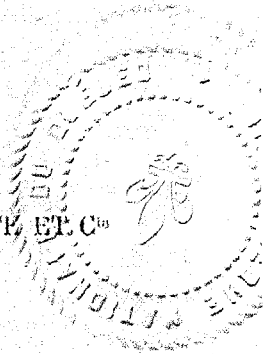
L. R. MASSON

première série



QUÉBEC
DE L'IMPRIMERIE GÉNÉRALE A. COTÉ ET C^{ie}

1889



INTRODUCTION

Le juge en chef Draper, appelé à donner son témoignage devant une commission de la Chambre des Communes, disait, en 1857 : *I hope you will not laugh at me as very visionary ! but I hope to see the time, or that my children may live to see the time when there is a railway going across that country (le Nord-Ouest), and ending at the Pacific.*

La vision du juge Draper s'est réalisée ; avant longtemps nous serons appelés à jouir, dans toute leur plénitude, des avantages qui nous sont assurés par la possession des immenses territoires du Nord-Ouest, acquis au Canada, grâce à la prévoyance de nos pères et à l'esprit d'entreprise de ce groupe d'hommes courageux et infatigables dont on est aujourd'hui trop porté à oublier les travaux : les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest.

Les exploits de nos pères sont connus. Entraînés par l'attrait irrésistible des voyages, ils ont poussé leurs

explorations jusqu'aux bords du Mississipi et aux rives de la Baie d'Hudson.

Un Canadien courageux, digne émule de ses frères de France, M. de La Vérandrye, désirant étendre les possessions de son Roi jusqu'aux rivages de la Grande mer de l'Ouest, a même échelonné sur sa route de nombreux forts, ou postes militaires, devant servir à protéger le commerce des pelleteries et à affirmer l'autorité de la France dans ces régions jusqu'alors inconnues.

Les malheurs de la guerre ne permirent pas aux Français de continuer leur exploration, et le commerce des pelleteries, source si considérable de richesse pour la Nouvelle-France, fut, en quelques années, complètement détruit ou détourné vers la Baie d'Hudson.

Des hommes non moins courageux se chargèrent, cependant, de continuer leur œuvre, et d'assurer au Canada anglais ce que leurs devanciers avaient conquis à la Nouvelle-France. Les marchands du Canada, les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, leurs commis, leurs "voyageurs", ceux-ci tous Canadiens-français, se répandirent sur leurs traces, et, dès 1776, ils avaient atteint, au nord, les extrêmes limites des régions connues des Français.

En 1784, MM. Cuthbert Grant et Laurent Leroux établissent au grand lac des Esclaves un poste que l'on nomme aujourd'hui Fort Résolution. En 1790, Peter Pangman taille son nom sur un pin gigantesque

en vue des Montagnes Rocheuses, et marque ainsi le point le plus éloigné jusqu'alors atteint dans cette région.

Alexandre MacKenzie pénètre jusqu'à l'Océan Glacial; puis, traversant les Montagnes Rocheuses, il inscrit son nom sur les falaises de l'Océan Pacifique.

Jules-Maurice Quesnel s'enfonce dans les Montagnes Rocheuses et donne son nom à la Rivière Quesnel; son chef, Simon Fraser, explore jusqu'à la mer les rives du fleuve qui doit porter son nom, et découvre de nouveaux champs d'exploitation pour le commerce canadien.

David Thompson explore, le premier, la branche septentrionale du fleuve Columbia, et reconnaît, en 1797, les sources du Mississipi.

Les travaux combinés de ces hommes assurent, sans conteste, au Canada, par le traité de l'Orégon, la possession de riches territoires.

La fortune, pendant de nombreuses années, sourit aux efforts de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, et lorsque, après une longue lutte avec son aînée, la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, son étoile vint à pâlir, et qu'il lui fallut confondre son existence indépendante avec celle de sa puissante rivale, les sympathies du Canada, qu'elle avait si puissamment contribué à enrichir, ne lui firent point défaut.

Les vieux Bourgeois et leurs braves "voyageurs" furent cependant bientôt oubliés. Le trafic qu'ils avaient

jusqu'alors conduit à travers le Canada, reprit la route de la baie d'Hudson, et bientôt Washington Irving put dire : *The feudal state of Fort William is at an end ; its council chamber is silent and deserted ; its banquet hall no longer echoes to the burst of loyalty or the wild World ditty ; the lords of the lakes and forest have passed away !*

Nous espérons, par les pages qui vont suivre, et la publication de documents que des relations de famille ont mis en notre possession, réveiller le souvenir de cette génération d'hommes forts, sinon parfaits, dont les enfants, dispersés sur toute l'étendue des territoires de l'Ouest, ont presque entièrement oublié la mémoire.

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LES BOURGEOIS

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La création de l'immense empire colonial de la France dans le vieux monde ; l'établissement de la Nouvelle-France, son rapide développement dans des circonstances cependant bien peu favorables, et l'extension de la puissance française sur tous les points de notre continent, seraient autant de problèmes inexplicables, s'il fallait juger de la France du dix-septième siècle par ce que l'on voit aujourd'hui dans notre ancienne mère-patrie.

Cet esprit d'aventures, cet attrait pour l'inconnu, cet amour des voyages qui distinguaient nos pères sont

aujourd'hui presque nuls en France. On semble plutôt vouloir se concentrer sur le sol natal, et on ne quitte plus guère le pays que chassé par la misère ou les dissensions politiques.

Un homme distingué de France, très ami de l'état de choses actuel, voulant expliquer ce contraste, disait que, de nos jours, sous le régime de la liberté, le peuple est trop heureux pour émigrer, tandis que, sous les rois, la misère était si grande, la liberté si restreinte, que la France était menacée de dépeuplement.

Le système politique qui régissait la France à cette époque n'était cependant pas exceptionnel. Tous les peuples du continent y étaient soumis, et, sous un régime analogue, l'Angleterre, dont le gouvernement n'était en somme ni meilleur ni plus mauvais que celui de la France, a longtemps continué son œuvre d'expansion.

Une grande institution de l'ancien régime, que la révolution a balayée de la France, mais n'a pu encore atteindre chez sa grande et séculaire rivale, le droit d'aînesse, a, croyons-nous, considérablement contribué à asseoir la puissance française dans le monde entier.

Il avait concentré dans quelques mains la grande richesse territoriale qui faisait la fortune de la France. Les cadets de famille, ne voulant pas faire mentir le vieil adage que "noblesse oblige", se virent contraints d'embrasser la carrière des armes, soit dans l'armée de terre, soit dans la marine, où leurs aptitudes spéciales

leur donnaient le droit d'aspirer aux plus hautes positions.

Les colonies offraient nécessairement de vastes champs d'exploitation à cette jeunesse bouillante et, en général, instruite, dont la vie, sous un régime différent, se serait probablement usée au milieu des séductions de Paris et des grandes villes de province, au lieu de se dépenser généreusement pour le service de la France.

Il faut cependant l'admettre, le trafic des pelleteries fut le mobile le plus puissant de l'établissement de la Nouvelle-France. Des fortunes considérables y furent créées, tantôt par le commerce libre, tantôt par de puissantes compagnies qui avaient obtenu du Roi non-seulement le monopole du commerce mais encore la charge de gouverner le pays.

Ces grandes entreprises ayant, par leur mauvaise administration, failli au but que l'on se proposait, la traite retomba entre les mains indisciplinées des "Coureurs des bois," ces héros des plaines et de la forêt, singulier mélange de bien et de mal, qui pendant longtemps ont fourni des héros à nos romanciers modernes : natures extravagantes, à la fois légères et sérieuses, cruelles et compatissantes, crédules, superstitieuses même, et parfois impies.

Imprévoyant, comme le sont tous les enfants de la forêt, ce que le coureur des bois avait amassé par un travail incessant et pénible de douze à quinze mois, il le dépensait dans quelques jours de joies criminelles,

puis s'en allait redemander au désert cette liberté dont il était si fier, et lui apportait en échange les vices et les maux des populations civilisées.

La démoralisation des races indigènes étant devenue alarmante, les missionnaires durent intervenir pour arrêter le mal grandissant de jour en jour.

Le gouvernement, à leur sollicitation, résolut d'adopter le système de licences, et d'accorder des privilèges exclusifs de traite à d'anciens officiers auxquels on assignait un district particulier en récompense de services rendus. Afin de protéger la traite, on leur permettait d'établir des forts dans les endroits les plus favorables. C'est ainsi que furent successivement échelonnés, de 1731 à 1748, par M. de La Vérandrye et ses fils, le fort Saint-Pierre, sur le lac La Pluie ; le fort Saint-Charles, sur le lac des Bois ; le fort Maurepas, près de l'embouchure de la rivière Winnipeg ; le fort Dauphin, au nord-ouest du lac Manitoba ; le fort La Reine, près l'extrémité sud du lac Manitoba, d'autres disent sur les bords de l'Assiniboine ; le fort Rouge, au confluent de l'Assiniboine et de la rivière Rouge ; le fort Bourbon, à la tête du lac Winnipeg ; le fort Poskoyac, sur la Saskatchewan, et le fort Lacorne (Nipawi), aux fourches de cette rivière.

En 1752, quelques années seulement avant la conquête, un parent de M. de La Vérandrye, M. de Niverville, établissait le fort Jonquière au pied des montagnes, à l'endroit même où, plus d'un siècle après,

le capitaine Brisebois, de la police à cheval, fondait un poste qui porta, pendant quelques mois, le nom de son fondateur, et se nomme aujourd'hui Calgary. (1)

L'expérience d'un siècle a prouvé que les explorateurs français n'avaient pas mal choisi leurs postes de traite ; et lorsque, plus tard, les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, leurs successeurs naturels, étendirent leur commerce dans ces territoires, ils s'établirent presque invariablement aux endroits choisis par leurs devanciers, ou tout auprès. En 1874, le gouvernement du Canada hésita longuement entre Nepigon et Kamistiquia, deux postes fondés par les Français, en 1679 et en 1717, pour y fixer le terminus du chemin de fer du Pacifique Canadien.

Une des premières conséquences de l'établissement des privilèges par districts, fut l'abolition de la vente des liqueurs spiritueuses, ce fléau des tribus sauvages, presque aussi désastreux que la petite vérole qui devait bientôt les décimer. Les sauvages, ayant de plus la certitude de trouver sur leurs terres un débouché assuré pour leurs pelleteries, s'éloignèrent moins des postes, et furent plus facilement soumis à l'influence moralisatrice des missionnaires.

Ces derniers avaient alors un double rôle : ils favorisaient la traite en donnant des idées d'ordre et de justice aux sauvages, et ils servaient de frein à la cupidité

(1) Sulte. Histoire des Canadiens-français. Il y a doute au sujet du site du Fort La Jonquière. Quelques-uns le veulent aux sources de la Saskatchewan (Poskoyac.)

des traitants, qui savaient que les indigènes avaient des défenseurs dans ces hommes dévoués, et que toute infraction aux règles de la justice parviendrait bientôt à la connaissance des autorités.

Les résultats obtenus ont dû être merveilleux, car Sir Alexander MacKenzie, dans sa remarquable Histoire du commerce des pelleteries, dit que, lorsque les premiers Bourgeois de la compagnie se répandirent dans le Nord-Ouest, on voyait encore des vestiges d'exploitations agricoles et la trace de roues de charrettes auprès des emplacements des vieux forts.

Lord Selkirk, le grand rival de Sir Alexander MacKenzie, dit, quelques années plus tard, que le système suivi par les Français était propre à créer un certain bien-être et à civiliser les sauvages. "On en trouve la preuve, dit-il, en comparant leur état actuel (1815) avec ce qu'ils étaient immédiatement après la conquête de cette province par l'Angleterre ; on trouvait alors des villages populeux dans beaucoup d'endroits dans lesquels on rencontre maintenant à peine deux ou trois familles errantes, adonnées à la crapule, en proie au besoin et à la misère."

Sir Alexander MacKenzie, après avoir fait un juste éloge de l'esprit de dévouement des missionnaires français, affirme, il est vrai, que leurs travaux évangéliques ont été sans résultats appréciables ; que le souvenir de leur passage dans le pays était complètement disparu de la mémoire des sauvages ; que c'est à peine si quel-

ques vieux coureurs des bois se rappelaient leurs noms ; et il attribue ce fait à la manière dont ils s'y étaient pris pour étendre la Foi dont ils étaient les zélés ministres.

Ils commençaient invariablement, leur reproche-t-il, par s'habituer à la vie sauvage ; ils adoptaient les manières et les usages des nations qu'ils voulaient convertir ; ils se nationalisaient en quelque sorte parmi elles, et, en se rendant ainsi dépendants des Sauvages, ils devenaient l'objet, non de leur vénération, mais de leur mépris.

L'expérience constatée par Lord Selkirk et par l'illustre voyageur lui-même, a cependant prouvé le contraire, et l'on peut dire que cette grande facilité, que les missionnaires catholiques puisaient dans leur foi et dans leur charité, de s'identifier avec les peuples qu'ils avaient à évangéliser, et de se soumettre aux privations inhérentes à la vie sauvage et nomade, est une des grandes causes de leurs incontestables succès. Pauvre entre les pauvres, et sans aucun appui extérieur, le missionnaire, son bréviaire sous le bras et son chapelet à la ceinture, se sentait suffisamment armé pour conquérir un monde au Christ.

Les deux faits suivants feront connaître l'honnêteté qui régnait au Nord-Ouest au milieu du siècle dernier. En 1765, quelques années seulement après la Conquête, M. Henry ayant distribué pour trois mille "plus" (1)

(1) Le "plus" était l'unité monétaire dans le Nord-Ouest et valait une bonne peau de castor.

de crédit, fut, le printemps suivant, payé intégralement de toutes ses avances, à l'exception de trente " plus " qu'une famille ne put payer à cause de la mort d'un de ses membres. Les parents du défunt, cependant, se cotisèrent pour acquitter la dette, parce que, disaient-ils, son esprit ne dormirait pas en paix si son nom restait dans les livres de M. Henry.

Quelques années plus tard, mais avant la compétition effrénée établie par le système libre, M. Pond, après une saison très fructueuse, n'ayant pu descendre toutes les pelleteries qu'il avait achetées, les laissa en toute confiance dans sa loge, et, à son retour, l'année suivante, il les trouva intactes.

Si l'on compare cet état de choses avec ce que l'on devait voir quelques années plus tard, on restera convaincu que le système de traite établi dans le Nord-Ouest pendant les dernières années du régime français, a produit, grâce en grande partie à l'influence bienfaisante des missionnaires, des résultats remarquables. M. Harmon, dans l'intéressante relation de sa vie au Nord-Ouest, constate que, même cinquante ans après le départ du dernier missionnaire français du poste de la Rivière Souris, on se souvenait encore des prières des prêtres français.

Cox, dans son livre "*Adventures on the Columbia River*," dit que, durant le cours de son voyage, en 1811, on lui montrait très souvent à plus de cinq à six cents milles de la civilisation, de petites huttes en bois encore

ornées de crucifix et autres symboles du christianisme. “ Ces demeures sont maintenant désertes, dit-il, mais elles sont encore regardées avec un pieux respect par les voyageurs. Les pauvres sauvages eux-mêmes, qui, depuis le départ des Jésuites, sont retombés dans leurs vieilles habitudes, portent le plus grand respect à ces maisons, qui étaient habitées, disent-ils, par les bons pères blancs, qui ne les volaient jamais, ne les trichaient jamais comme les autres hommes blancs.”

La Conquête devait nécessairement amener de grands changements dans la traite des *Pays d'en Haut*. Les privilèges, les monopoles, incompatibles avec les idées nouvelles, disparurent graduellement ; les postes militaires et de trafic furent abandonnés, et les anciens Bourgeois ou commandants, ruinés, laissèrent le pays. Les traiteurs anglais, qui voulurent marcher sur leurs traces, ne connaissaient ni le pays, ni les indigènes, qui leur étaient antipathiques ; et ces derniers, ne trouvant plus de débouchés du côté du Canada pour leurs pelleteries, se dirigèrent vers la Baie d'Hudson.

Un grand nombre de coureurs des bois, qui regrettaient la bonhomie et la familiarité de leurs anciens maîtres, et ne pouvaient se faire aux manières plus rudes et aux idées plus sévères et plus pratiques des nouveaux venus, les y suivirent ou se dispersèrent parmi les différentes tribus. Les relations avec le Canada furent interrompues ; et, après quelques années, il ne resta plus dans le Nord-Ouest que de rares vestiges de l'influence civilisatrice de l'ancien régime.

Le premier Anglais qui osa s'aventurer dans les pays jusqu'alors exclusivement exploités par les Français, fut Alexander Henry, hardi marchand qui n'avait jamais fait la traite et ne connaissait pas le pays. Il se confia entièrement à un ancien traiteur français, Etienne Campion, et n'eut qu'à se féliciter de ses rapports avec cet homme intègre et fidèle.

N'ayant pu trouver à Montréal, dont le commerce avait été en partie détruit par les événements récents, les marchandises convenables à la traite, il dut les acheter à Albany, puis il revint à Montréal où il obtint du général Gage la permission de se rendre à Michilimakinac.

Il s'embarqua à Lachine, vers le milieu d'août, et remonta l'Ottawa, au grand étonnement des Sauvages, qui lui dirent qu'il y avait folie pour un Anglais d'entreprendre un voyage semblable, et qu'il serait certainement massacré par les Sauvages d'en haut. Sur ce, ils le mettent eux-mêmes à la rançon d'un baril de rhum, alléguant que, puisque, tôt ou tard, il devait être rançonné, autant valait que ce fût par eux que par d'autres.

M. Henry s'étant convaincu que l'hostilité des Sauvages était exclusivement dirigée contre lui, adopta le costume de ses voyageurs ; il arriva ainsi déguisé à Michilimakinac, le but de son voyage, et y fut témoin de la prise du fort par les Chippewas, et du massacre de la garnison.

Après avoir été caché pendant quelque temps par une femme sauvage, il fut obligé de se rendre, bien heureux

encore d'avoir la vie sauve et d'en être quitte pour la perte de toutes ses marchandises. Il erra pendant quelque temps au milieu des tribus sauvages, et réussit enfin, presque ruiné, à atteindre Niagara.

Non découragé, cependant, il entreprit, en 1765, mais dans des conditions plus favorables, une autre expédition en société avec M. Jean-Baptiste Cadotte, qui avait fondé un poste sur la rive américaine de Sault Sainte-Marie. Les Anglais étaient alors devenus les maîtres sans conteste du pays, et M. Henry put obtenir du commandant du fort de Michilimakinac un privilège exclusif de traite autour du Lac Supérieur, les nouvelles autorités s'étant réservé, pendant quelques années après la cession du Canada, le droit d'accorder des monopoles dans les pays situés à l'ouest du Détroit.

M. J. B. Cadotte, grâce à la considération dont il jouissait dans le pays, et à sa connaissance des Sauvages, de leurs mœurs et de leurs habitudes, contribua beaucoup à assurer le succès de la société.

En 1775, les deux associés unirent leurs intérêts avec ceux de Messieurs Joseph et Thomas Frobisher, et formèrent avec eux et M. Peter Pond une puissante organisation qui devait, quelques années plus tard, amener la création de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest.

A l'automne de 1776, après une absence de plus de quinze années, M. Henry revint à Montréal, où il fut reçu par tous à bras ouverts. Son énergie et ses succès y avaient tourné les têtes, et les récits de ses nom

breuses et intéressantes aventures dans les “ pays d'en haut ” étaient le sujet de toutes les conversations.

Il passa presque immédiatement en Europe, muni de lettres de M. Lacorne de Saint-Luc pour son frère, M. l'abbé de Lacorne ; visita la France ; fut reçu à la Cour, présenté à l'infortunée Marie-Antoinette, et revint au Canada enthousiasmé de ce qu'il avait vu et de la réception qui lui avait été faite.

M. Henry ne put, cependant, résister à la tentation de revoir les “ pays sauvages ” où il avait tant souffert et s'était enrichi. Il y séjourna quelques années, puis revint à Montréal, où il se maria.

Il prit part à la formation de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, en 1784, mais ne s'occupa plus de la traite, et, en 1796, il se retira complètement, après avoir cédé les droits qu'il avait dans la Compagnie à son neveu, Alexandre Henry, junior. Ce dernier prit un intérêt considérable aux affaires de la compagnie, dont il devint un Bourgeois les plus influents. Il se noya à Astoria, en 1811, en voulant aborder l'*Isaac Todd*, navire de la compagnie.

M. Henry, senior, consacra le reste de sa vie à la maison de commerce qu'il avait établie à Montréal et mourut en 1824, âgé de quatre-vingt-sept ans.

Les traiteurs s'étaient tenus jusqu'en 1767 dans les pays situés au sud du Lac Supérieur, et dans les régions avoisinantes, mais cette année-là, un M. Clause se décida à pénétrer plus au nord, afin d'aller au-devant des Sauvages qui ne traitaient plus qu'avec la Compagnie

de la Baie d'Hudson. Il se rendit beaucoup au-delà du Lac Nepigon, mais il faillit y périr de faim, étant réduit, ainsi que ses hommes, à dévorer des ballots de pelleteries pour subsister.

Malgré ce triste début, deux ou trois autres expéditions furent entreprises, mais avec des résultats encore plus désastreux. Nombre de voyageurs y étant morts de faim, le district eut bientôt une si mauvaise réputation qu'il fut, pendant bien des années, très difficile de trouver des hommes disposés à s'y rendre.

Une expédition de traite envoyée par un Monsieur Côté, en 1783, sous le commandement d'un guide nommé Constant, y perdit quatre de ses hommes, qui furent dévorés par des Sauvages mourant de faim. Lorsqu'en 1785, la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest y envoya M. Duncan Cameron, le district ne produisait plus que cinquante ballots de pelleteries, tandis que les derniers traiteurs français en retiraient, dit M. Cameron dans son journal, plus de cent ballots de peaux de castor, estimées très supérieures à celles du Nord-Ouest.

Pendant que ces tentatives infructueuses se faisaient au Nord, M. Thomas Curry, de Montréal, entreprenait, de son côté, une expédition vers l'Ouest.

Il se rendit jusqu'à Caministiquia, premier poste de la grande ligne intérieure française, où il trouva le vieux fort incendié. Il y fit une traite si avantageuse que, l'année suivante, nombre de traiteurs l'y suivirent. La plupart se rendirent, cependant, au Grand Portage,

qui devint bientôt le principal lieu de rendez-vous de tous les traiteurs du Nord-Ouest, et la vieille station française de Caministiquia fut abandonnée et pour longtemps oubliée.

Non satisfait des succès qu'il avait obtenus, Thomas Curry entreprit, en 1770, d'atteindre les plus éloignés des anciens postes français. Il ne put se rendre cependant qu'au fort Bourbon, et revint avec une si riche moisson qu'il se décida à se retirer de la traite.

M. James Finlay poursuivit l'entreprise, et il atteignit, l'année suivante, le fort Lacorne, que Sir Alexander MacKenzie nomme Nipawee, et qu'il dit être le poste le plus éloigné que les Français aient établi, oubliant sans doute le fort Jonquière, aux sources de la Saskatchewan.

En 1772, M. Joseph Frobisher établit le fort Cumberland, près du site autrefois occupé par le fort Poscoyac, sur la Saskatchewan, et se décida à abandonner les sentiers battus pour se diriger vers le Nord. Il atteignit, au prix de grandes difficultés, les bords de la rivière Missinipi (Churchill) et y rencontra nombre de Sauvages se dirigeant vers la baie d'Hudson, chargés de précieuses pelleteries destinées au paiement des crédits qu'ils y avaient reçus.

On était peu scrupuleux dans le Nord-Ouest à cette époque. M. Frobisher entra en pourparlers avec ces Sauvages, leur offrit un plus haut prix, et acheta toutes leurs marchandises. La quantité en était si grande

qu'il ne put les descendre toutes, et fut contraint, pour les mettre à l'abri, de bâtir un fort qui porta depuis le nom de Fort La Traite, en mémoire de ce succès.

L'année suivante, M. Frobisher envoya son frère, Thomas Frobisher, établir le poste de l'Ile à la Crosse.

En 1775, Monsieur Peter Pond, qui, lui aussi, avait lié ses intérêts avec ceux de Messieurs Henry, Cadotte et Frobisher, poussa vigoureusement vers le Nord. Il fit la traite pendant quelque temps sur les bords de la Rivière aux Anglais (Churchill), ainsi nommée en l'honneur de M. Frobisher, le premier Anglais qui l'eut visitée, puis traversa, le premier, la hauteur des terres au portage La Loche, et, deux ans après, atteignit enfin la célèbre région d'Athabasca qui devint plus tard l'*Emporium* du Nord-Ouest, le *far famed Athabasca* de tous les Bourgeois et commis de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest. Il y bâtit le Fort Athabasca, sur la Rivière à la Biche, à quarante milles de sa décharge, et y créa un joli jardin qui fit, quelques années plus tard, l'admiration de Sir Alexander MacKenzie.

Monsieur Pond était un homme d'un caractère énergique, d'une activité et d'un courage surprenants. Il employait tous les loisirs que lui accordait la traite à des travaux utiles et à des études sur le pays. Il avait même fait préparer une grande carte du Nord-Ouest, carte très inexacte d'ailleurs, dont il sera parlé plus tard, et qu'il désirait offrir à l'impératrice de Russie. Il

laissa, cependant, un triste souvenir dans le pays. Altier, extravagant, soupçonneux, ses rapports avec ses adversaires dans la traite, et même avec ses associés, ne furent pas de nature à le faire estimer.

Ayant été accusé d'avoir commis deux meurtres au Nord-Ouest, et ayant subi un procès qui n'eut pas de suite à cause de quelque défaut de procédure, il se retira de la compagnie, en 1790, après avoir vendu l'intérêt qu'il y possédait à monsieur McGillivray, et alla se fixer à Boston, sa ville natale, où il aida puissamment les commissaires américains chargés de définir la frontière méridionale des possessions anglaises à l'ouest des grands lacs. Il y mourut pauvre.

Les succès obtenus par les pionniers du commerce canadien dans l'Ouest ne pouvaient manquer d'y attirer de nombreux aventuriers, la plupart peu scrupuleux et bien déterminés à faire fortune le plus rapidement possible. La compétition, qui, dès avant 1770, causait de grands désordres dans le voisinage du lac Supérieur, y devint excessive et fut la source de désordres plus grands encore.

Les traiteurs, voulant tous avoir la part du lion sans se préoccuper de l'avenir, eurent recours à tous les moyens que peut suggérer la cupidité, sans s'occuper des résultats de leur conduite sur l'esprit des Sauvages. Se trompant entr'eux, ils leur enseignèrent à les tromper eux-mêmes; se méprisant ouvertement, ils leur appri-

rent à ne plus avoir pour les blancs cette crainte superstitieuse qui faisait leur force. (1)

Voyant les traiteurs très affaiblis par leurs dissensions, les tribus du Sud et de l'Ouest crurent le moment venu de frapper un grand coup, et une vaste conspiration fut lentement, mais sûrement ourdie pour un massacre général des blancs et le pillage de leurs postes. Une trop forte dose de laudanum administrée à un Sauvage pour l'apaiser pendant une "boisson", une de ces terribles orgies si fréquentes alors, fut l'étincelle qui provoqua l'incendie dont les matériaux étaient malheureusement trop bien préparés. Les sauvages furieux vengèrent la mort de leur camarade en tuant le traiteur et plusieurs des hommes à son service. Les autres échappèrent au massacre par la fuite, abandonnant le poste et tout ce qu'il contenait.

Quelques mois après, dans l'automne de 1780, deux forts furent attaqués sur l'Assiniboine. L'un de ces forts, le fort aux Trembles, (2) commandé par messieurs Bruce et Boyer, qui avaient vingt-et-un coureurs des bois sous leurs ordres, fut attaqué par les Assiniboines et les "Sauvages du bas de la rivière", au nombre de plus de cent guerriers. Des vingt-trois assiégés, onze se cachèrent; les douze autres se défendirent bravement,

(1) Il n'était pas rare de voir des familles, même nombreuses, demander avec instances aux traiteurs de les faire accompagner dans leurs chasses par quelque coureur des bois. Les traiteurs se prêtaient avec complaisance à une exigence qui les mettait en état de surveiller leurs propres intérêts, et d'éloigner les concurrents.

(2) Ainsi nommé à cause de sa proximité d'une forêt appelée "La Grande Tremblière", près du Portage La Prairie.

chassèrent du fort les assaillants qui avaient réussi à s'y introduire, et en fermèrent les portes, après avoir tué et blessé une trentaine de Sauvages et perdu trois des leurs, Belleau, Facteau et Lachance. Ne se sentant cependant plus en sûreté, et craignant de voir leurs communications coupées, messieurs Bruce et Boyer se décidèrent à abandonner le poste et à se réfugier à l'embouchure de l'Assiniboine, après avoir embarqué toutes leurs marchandises et leurs pelleteries.

De nombreux autres postes furent attaqués, et le complot prenait des proportions redoutables, lorsque la Providence, dans ses desseins impénétrables, sauva la population blanche des territoires, la vraie coupable, en répandant sur les malheureux indigènes le fléau terrible de la petite vérole, qui, dans sa marche rapide, ravagea tout le pays, de l'Assiniboine à la Saskatchewan, et même jusqu'à la Rivière aux Anglais.

Cette maladie, inconnue des tribus du Nord, fit de si grands ravages que, dans nombre d'endroits, la population fut presque entièrement anéantie. Des tribus de plusieurs centaines de loges furent presque complètement détruites ; c'est à peine si quelques familles survécurent, et d'une tribu de cinq cents loges dix personnes seulement échappèrent !

Les survivants, fuyant le fléau, allaient transporter la maladie chez les tribus voisines. Les malheureux Sauvages, affolés de peur, et ne sachant conjurer le mal, se plongeaient dans les rivières pour éteindre le feu qui

les dévorait ; une mort presque immédiate mettait alors fin à leurs souffrances. Nombre d'entre eux se donnaient la mort pour échapper à l'horrible fin qui les attendait, et contre laquelle ils se sentaient impuissants à lutter, car " le *Bon Manitou*, disaient-ils, les avait livrés au *Mauvais Manitou* en punition de leurs crimes. "

Cox, dans la relation de ses aventures sur la rivière Columbia, rapporte qu'un homme bien connu dans le pays, lui a assuré avoir vu trois cents cadavres d'hommes, femmes et enfants, suspendus aux arbres près d'un village cris dans lequel il ne restait plus que quarante personnes.

On croit que la petite vérole fut transportée au Nord par une bande d'Assiniboïnes de retour d'une expédition de guerre au pays des Mandanes, sur les bords du Missouri. Le terrible fléau, inconnu des Assiniboïnes, exerçait ses ravages chez les Mandanes, et avait déjà détruit la plus grande partie de cette tribu lorsque les Assiniboïnes y pénétrèrent. Ces derniers n'y trouvèrent que des malades et des mourants qu'ils massacrèrent, et auxquels ils enlevèrent la chevelure. Fiers de cette facile victoire, ils reprirent le chemin de leur pays, ne se doutant pas qu'ils apportaient la mort avec eux. Très peu purent atteindre les bords de l'Assiniboïne, où ils répandirent la maladie, que leur ignorance et leur malpropreté ne firent qu'aggraver.

4

II

Formation de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest.—Vigoureuse opposition des mécontents.—Exploration d'une nouvelle route pour l'intérieur par M. Umfreville.—Réunion des divers intérêts dans le Nord-Ouest.—Rapide extension du trafic canadien.

Les Blancs avaient échappé au danger qui les menaçait, mais la traite, faute de chasseurs, était ruinée, et elle ne commença à se relever que deux ou trois ans après.

Les traiteurs oublièrent bientôt, cependant, le terrible coup qu'ils avaient reçu, et ils commencèrent à se livrer de nouveau aux manœuvres qui avaient failli assurer leur perte, lorsqu'enfin, presque ruinés par une compétition démoralisante, les plus importants d'entre eux résolurent d'unir leurs intérêts, et de former, sous le nom de " Compagnie du Nord-Ouest ", une association assez puissante pour braver toute compétition.

La Compagnie fut divisée en seize actions ou parts, sans mise de capital, chaque actionnaire devant, au lieu d'argent, fournir une certaine proportion des articles nécessaires à la traite, et diviser les profits lors de la rentrée des pelleteries. L'administration générale des affaires fut confiée à Messieurs Benjamin et Joseph

Frobisher, les doyens des traiteurs du Nord-Ouest, et à M. Simon McTavish, qui recevaient une commission comme agents.

Il avait été entendu, parmi les nouveaux associés, que des mesures seraient prises pour donner satisfaction à ceux qui, n'ayant pu descendre, étaient restés dans les territoires ; mais il fut malheureusement impossible de les mettre tous d'accord, et lorsque au printemps de 1784, les agents se rendirent au Grand Portage avec leurs lettres de créance, ils y trouvèrent MM. Peter Pond et Peter Pangman très mécontents tous deux, le premier de la part qui lui avait été assignée, le second de n'en avoir reçu aucune, bien qu'il eut droit au partage.

Les beaux jours que l'on se promettait pour la nouvelle compagnie devaient être, par conséquent, de courte durée. MM. Pond et Pangman descendirent immédiatement à Montréal avec la détermination d'entreprendre la lutte contre les nouveaux associés. Ils firent des ouvertures à MM. Gregory, McLeod et Cie, et réussirent à les engager à former une compagnie en opposition, compagnie que M. Pond déserta presque aussitôt pour retourner à ses anciens amis.

Il y avait alors, dans le bureau de M. Gregory, un jeune homme à esprit inquiet et aventureux ; nature énergique, tempérament vigoureux, volonté de fer, un de ses hommes qui sont taillés pour la lutte et les grandes entreprises. Depuis quelques années, il avait rendu de

grands services à ses patrons, qui, ayant conçu pour le jeune Ecossais la plus grande estime, résolurent de récompenser son zèle et d'utiliser son activité, en lui donnant une part dans la nouvelle Compagnie qu'ils allaient former pour entrer en compétition avec la puissante organisation des traiteurs du Nord-Ouest.

Son nom était Alexandre MacKenzie, nom ignoré jusqu'alors, mais qui allait bientôt être écrit en caractères ineffaçables dans l'histoire du Nord-Ouest, comme il l'a été sur les falaises désertes de l'Océan Pacifique, qu'il devait, le premier, atteindre en traversant les immenses solitudes de l'Ouest.

Vers le même temps, arrivait d'Ecosse un autre jeune homme du même nom, Roderic McKenzie, ayant pour toute fortune, une lettre de recommandation auprès de M. Peter Stuart, de Québec, qui lui conseilla de se livrer à la carrière aventureuse des trafiquants de pelleteries.

L'occasion ne pouvait être plus favorable. Roderic McKenzie fut admis comme commis dans la nouvelle compagnie Gregory, McLeod, avec un engagement de trois ans. De ce jour, se forma entre les deux cousins cette puissante amitié, qui devait toujours durer, malgré les contrariétés que l'avenir leur réservait.

Au printemps de 1785, deux des associés, MM. Pangman et Ross, prirent les devants, afin de préparer un poste au Grand Portage. Ils choisirent un site tout auprès du fort de leurs rivaux, mais sur le côté opposé

de la rivière. En quelques semaines, ils avaient construit un hangar et un magasin très solides et suffisants pour la traite de l'année.

Au mois de juin, les autres associés, leurs commis et voyageurs, à l'exception de M. McLeod, qui resta à Montréal, s'embarquaient à Sainte-Anne, et, quelques semaines après, tous se trouvaient réunis au quartier général du Grand Portage (1).

M. Ross fut préposé au "département" d'Athabasca; M. Alexandre MacKenzie devait exploiter celui de la Rivière aux Anglais; M. Pangman fut envoyé au fort des Prairies, et M. Pollock, le doyen des commis, à la Rivière Rouge.

Il fallait un courage plus qu'ordinaire pour décider ces hommes à entreprendre une lutte à outrance contre une puissante organisation comprenant à peu près tous les anciens traiteurs, et ayant à sa disposition une armée de commis expérimentés et de guides sûrs. Ils se partagèrent, cependant, cette immense région avec la détermination bien arrêtée de forcer leurs adversaires à leur céder leur bonne part de trafic, et à réparer l'injustice de leur première division. Ils y réussirent enfin, mais au prix de tels sacrifices, que M. A. Mackenzie écrivait, quelques années plus tard, qu'il lui faudrait quatre ans d'un travail assidu pour se relever des pertes qu'il avait subies.

(1) MM. Gregory, Pangman, John Ross et Alexandre MacKenzie, bourgeois, MM. Duncan Pollock, commis, James Finlay, le fils de M. James Finlay, un des pionniers de la traite sous le nouveau régime, et Roderic McKenzie, apprentis commis.

Le traité de Versailles, qui avait mis fin à la guerre entre l'Angleterre et les Etat-Unis, avait transféré à ces derniers tous les territoires s'étendant des rives de l'Ohio aux grands lacs. D'après la décision des commissaires chargés de fixer la frontière, le Grand Portage, rendez-vous et quartier général des deux compagnies canadiennes, se trouva sur la ligne de séparation des deux pays : l'un des postes était même sur la rive américaine de la petite rivière qui marquait la frontière.

Il était évident qu'avant bien des années, il deviendrait impossible à une association canadienne de s'y maintenir ; et un des premiers soins de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest fut de s'assurer si une ligne de communication facile avec l'intérieur ne pouvait être trouvée plus au nord, et entièrement sur le territoire canadien.

Il y avait bien l'ancienne route de Kaministikia, qui avait, pendant tant d'années, servi aux Français ; mais cette route, abandonnée depuis quelques années seulement, était déjà devenue terre inconnue. La Compagnie dut pousser ses explorations vers la région du Lac Népigon, et confia l'entreprise à M. Edouard Umfreville, un ancien employé de la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, homme très intelligent, mais très préjugé contre ses anciens maîtres, si l'on en juge par son livre *The Present State of Hudson's Bay*, publié quelques années plus tard.

M. Umfreville était entré au service de la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, en 1771, en qualité d'écrivain, dit-

il, avec un salaire de quinze louis par année. Il demeura à son emploi jusqu'en 1782, alors qu'il fut fait prisonnier par l'héroïque La Pérouse, qui, avec une poignée d'hommes, balaya les côtes de la Baie, et s'empara, presque sans coup férir, des forts York et Prince de Galles.

Ces établissements furent bientôt remis à la Compagnie, mais M. Umfreville refusa de reprendre son service. Il s'en vint à Québec, décidé à tenter fortune dans les Pays d'en Haut, mais, cette fois, au service de ses anciens adversaires, qui ne manquèrent pas d'utiliser ses connaissances, et peut-être aussi ses préjugés.

Umfreville prit avec lui huit hommes, dont il ne nomme que trois : Saint-Germain, le contre-maître, Jean Roy et Dubé. Il se dirigea vers l'entrée du Népigon, et atteignit le portage de Roche Capitaine le 17 juin.

La relation inédite qu'il a laissée de son expédition est très circonstanciée, trop même pour être lue avec intérêt. Son unique but était de trouver une route passable, de l'indiquer d'une manière sûre et de la jalonner ; aussi ne manque-t-il pas de donner toutes les indications les plus minutieuses des directions prises et le nombre de milles parcourus à chaque changement de direction.

Il donne à tous les portages leurs anciens noms ; les hommes de l'équipage se chargent d'en donner à ceux qui n'en ont pas, et baptisent toutes les îles, les baies,

les pointes, des noms qu'ils trouvent les plus appropriés : " Portage la Praline ",—" Lac de la Butte de sable "—" Lac Eturgeon ",—" Ile du Diable ",—" Lac des Iles ",—" Lac de l'Original ",—" Grand Portage " ; et comme les lacs et les portages se prêtant à ces appellations sont nombreux, ces noms, si souvent répétés dans les pays sauvages, ont dû, dans la suite, causer bien des méprises.

Le voyage se fit à peu près avec les difficultés, les désagréments, les ennuis de toutes les expéditions semblables. M. Umfreville craignit même, à un moment, d'être obligé, faute de guide, d'abandonner l'entreprise ; mais il fit heureusement la rencontre du nommé Constant dont il a déjà été parlé, et qui avait eu une si triste expérience de la traite dans la région du Népigon. Constant lui ayant indiqué un Canadien libre d'engagement, Umfreville s'assura de ses services et put reprendre sa course.

Le 10 juillet, il atteint le lac Esturgeon, et passe le chantier où un M. James avait hiverné, en 1778 ; le 13, il est au lac Minnitakie, qu'il nomma Monataggé, la plus grande nappe d'eau qu'il a vue depuis son départ du lac Népigon ; le 16, il est au lac Seul, lieu de passage des Sauvages qui traitaient avec la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson au Fort Albany, et y reconnaît un Sauvage qu'il avait vu sur les bords de la Baie. Le 22, il traverse et nomme le portage des Chênes et celui des Trembles, et, le 23, il arrive au portage de l'Isle, sur la rivière

Winnipeg, où il atteint la ligne alors suivie par les canots du Grand Portage en destination de l'intérieur.

Il s'empressa, sur les lieux mêmes, de faire rapport que la route qu'il venait d'explorer était préférable à celle du Grand Portage, et que le trajet pouvait se faire facilement en trois semaines. On constata plus tard que le rapport d'Umfreville était exagéré et trop favorable.

Les Américains ne s'étant cependant pas hâtés de revendiquer leurs droits, et n'ayant pas poussé la traite de ces côtés, le Grand Portage continua encore pendant plusieurs années d'être le rendez-vous général des deux compagnies, et la route découverte par Umfreville ne fut jamais suivie pour communiquer avec l'intérieur.

L'attitude énergique prise dès l'origine par la Nouvelle Compagnie du Nord-Ouest en imposa à sa puissante rivale, et les hivers de 1785 et 1786 se passèrent, dans un grand nombre de districts, d'une manière assez paisible, malgré quelques appréhensions, de part et d'autre, et beaucoup d'irritation causée par une vigoureuse opposition.

Une lettre d'Alexandre MacKenzie à son cousin Roderic McKenzie, et écrite pendant l'automne de 1786, indique cependant que la situation était excessivement tendue, même dans les districts les plus paisibles :

“Je crois que nos rivaux ne se serviront pas de violence contre les Sauvages. Ils m'ont dit n'en avoir pas l'intention ; mais, qu'au contraire, ils permettraient aux

Sauvages d'aller commercer où ils l'entendraient. Je leur ai fait comprendre que s'ils agissaient autrement, ou s'ils ordonnaient à leurs hommes d'enlever de force et de porter les effets ou pelleteries des Sauvages dans leurs forts ou dans leurs hangars, je les rendrais eux-mêmes et eux seuls responsables, et agirais en conséquence : ce que je suis décidé de faire.

“ I a traite doit nous être ouverte comme à eux. J'en ai parlé à M. McGillivray avant son départ, et il m'a promis qu'il conseillerait aux Sauvages, et les obligerait, autant qu'il était en son pouvoir, de payer leurs crédits, et je suis certain qu'il le fera.

“ Soyez sur vos gardes avec M. Cartier, l'interprète de M. McGillivray : c'est un garçon insinuant et très intelligent. Soyez discret avec vos hommes ; sans cela tous ces vieux voyageurs sauront de vous tout ce qu'ils veulent savoir.

“ J'espère que vous vivez en meilleurs termes avec votre opposant que je ne vis avec le mien. Nous ne nous sommes pas adressé la parole depuis le départ des canots ; je crois cependant que c'est plutôt par indifférence que par haine, car nous n'avons pas eu de difficultés ensemble ”.

Il fut souvent remarqué que les meilleurs “retours” ne venaient pas des régions où l'on s'était fait la lutte la plus acharnée, mais, au contraire, des endroits où les adversaires, tout en faisant strictement leurs devoirs envers leurs compagnies respectives, avaient, par leur

modération, inspiré du respect aux Sauvages. Ces derniers, certains de n'être pas maltraités, s'ils manifestaient leurs préférences, s'empressaient de venir aux postes avec leurs pelleteries et leurs provisions, et souvent de les envoyer par leurs femmes et leurs enfants.

Au Lac du Serpent, dans le département de la Rivière aux Anglais, les deux chefs en opposition, MM. Roderic McKenzie et William McGillivray, ayant réussi à se tenir en bons termes, la traite de l'hiver de 1786 fut extraordinairement lucrative, et, au printemps, les deux adversaires, s'étant hâté de faire faire leurs ballots (*packs*), se décidèrent à descendre ensemble, afin de prouver à leurs Bourgeois que l'on pouvait parfaitement s'entendre et en même temps voir aux intérêts des deux Compagnies.

Les gais voyageurs, formant les deux brigades, et chantant à l'unisson de joyeux refrains, arrivèrent ensemble à l'Ile à la Crosse, leur quartier-général, au grand ébahissement de tous, mais à la grande satisfaction de leurs chefs MM. A. MacKenzie et P. Small.

Des rapports d'une aussi grande cordialité étaient cependant l'exception, et dépendaient du caractère des commis ou Bourgeois placés en antagonisme. Dans d'autres départements, la lutte amena les scènes de désordres et de violences inséparables du commerce libre et de la compétition entre compagnies puissantes, ayant à leur service nombre d'employés turbulents et querelleurs.

L'ancienne compagnie avait assigné au fougueux et intraitable M. Pond le département de l'Athabasca. Cet homme énergique s'empressa d'étendre ses opérations dans les régions non encore exploitées du Nord, et en dehors de l'influence de la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, qui réussissait encore à entraîner à la Baie de nombreux Sauvages de la région de l'Athabasca et de l'Île à la Crosse.

Il envoya Messieurs Leroux et Cuthbert Grant au Grand Lac des Esclaves, où ils établirent, à la décharge de la Rivière des Esclaves, un poste qui porta plus tard le nom de Fort Résolution.

M. Leroux qui avait plutôt le goût des découvertes que celui de la traite, se rendit même au nord du lac, à un endroit nommé ensuite Fort Providence, pour engager les Sauvages à venir traiter aux postes du sud.

Monsieur Pond avait pour adversaire, dans le district du Nord, un homme honorable et plus conciliant qu'énergique, M. Ross, qui ne sut pas, dès l'origine, en imposer suffisamment à son rival, plus disposé à se rendre justice à lui-même qu'à l'attendre des autres. De là des exactions qui finirent par exaspérer les hommes, et des rixes continuelles qui se terminèrent à la fin de l'hiver par un combat en règle dans lequel M. Ross fut tué.

La nouvelle de ce second meurtre, occasionné par M. Pond, n'arriva à l'Île à la Crosse qu'après le départ des Bourgeois et des canots pour le Grand Portage. M. R. McKenzie, qui était resté en charge, ne sachant à qui se fier, se décida à aller prévenir lui-même ses chefs.

Il prit un canot léger de la brigade d'Athabasca, avec cinq hommes, et arriva sans guide au Grand Portage, après un pénible voyage d'un mois.

Les Bourgeois, effrayés de la tournure que prenaient les affaires, se décidèrent à unir leurs intérêts et à former une seule compagnie ayant pour agents ou administrateurs, à Montréal et au Grand Portage, MM. McTavish, Frobisher et Gregory, qui devaient fournir les fonds, faire les acquisitions nécessaires et les spéculations financières moyennant une retenue de 5% en sus de leurs parts dans les bénéfices de la Compagnie.

Comme cette union inattendue s'était opérée après l'expédition dans l'intérieur d'une grande partie des marchandises de traite (*outfits*) pour l'hiver, il fut décidé de laisser à chaque compagnie la surveillance de ses intérêts jusqu'à l'arrivée des brigades à leurs destinations respectives, et de faire alors inventaire.

En conséquence, peu de changements furent faits. M. A. MacKenzie, qui prenait déjà une influence prépondérante dans la compagnie, fut chargé de remplacer M. Ross dans le département d'Athabasca, pour y agir de concert avec M. Pond, ou, peut-être, afin de surveiller ce dernier, dont les idées extravagantes commençaient à inquiéter les associés. Il y trouva la traite bien compromise, et les employés démoralisés par la rude compétition des années précédentes.

M. MacKenzie eut un instant l'idée de faire abandonner les postes du Nord, et, suivant en cela le système

pratiqué par la compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, d'attirer les Sauvages de ces régions vers Athabasca. Il rappella M. Leroux et ses hommes du Lac des Esclaves; mais la crainte de voir bénéficier de cette démarche la grande compagnie rivale qui avait encore un grand contrôle dans la région de l'Athabasca et de la Rivière aux Anglais, et savait encore en attirer les Sauvages jusqu'à la Baie, lui fit modifier ses plans, et, avec l'assentiment des agents, une nouvelle et plus forte impulsion fut, au contraire, donnée à l'extension des établissements vers le Nord et l'Ouest, où l'on ne craignait pas la compétition.

Monsieur Boyer, qui était au Fort au Tremblé lors du massacre de 1781, fut envoyé établir un poste sur la Rivière la Paix; M. Robert Grant fonda un fort sur la Rivière Qu'appelle, dont il fit ensuite sa résidence favorite et qu'il nomma Fort Espérance; (1) M. Leroux fut renvoyé sur les bords du Lac aux Esclaves avec instruction d'y pousser la traite aussi vigoureusement que possible.

Les Sauvages établis autour du Lac étant d'une nature indolente, M. Leroux envoya le plus marquant des chefs Chippewans, le "Chef Anglais", aux tribus du Nord pour les engager à venir traiter à son fort. Cette mission, accompagnée de succès, fut immédia-

(1) Le Fort Espérance devint plus tard le principal dépôt de provisions de la Compagnie. On y conservait de grandes quantités de viandes séchées et de pémican, que l'on distribuait dans les différents postes du Nord-Ouest comme réserve en cas de disette de gibier ou de poisson.

tement suivie d'une autre confiée à un simple employé, James Sutherland, qui revint au printemps avec de nombreux Sauvages et une quantité considérable de pelleteries. Quelques présents, judicieusement faits, aux chefs sauvages, produisirent l'effet voulu. Ces chefs, de retour dans leur pays, firent de tels éloges de la générosité et des bonnes dispositions des blancs, que, le printemps suivant, les Sauvages du Lac à la Marte, et de bien au-delà, vinrent à leur tour, et en grand nombre, au fort du Lac aux Esclaves.

Ces Sauvages, qui avaient à faire un trajet de plus d'un mois pour apporter leurs pelleteries au poste, et étaient obligés de laisser leurs familles à deux cents milles et au-delà dans l'intérieur, finirent par demander qu'on fondât un établissement plus au nord, ce que fit la Compagnie en construisant un fort au Lac à la Marte, à quinze journées de marche du Lac des Esclaves.

III

Influence de M. MacKenzie sur ses collègues.—Etablissement du Fort Chippewean.—Voyage d'Alexandre MacKenzie à la Mer Glaciale.—La Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson s'alarme des progrès des "Bourgeois."—Lutte peu loyale.—Supériorité des *Nor-Westers*.

—“ Que fais-tu ? ” demandait un jeune commis de la compagnie du Nord-Ouest à un camarade de son âge, qui, comme lui, avait reçu une bonne éducation.

—“ Je me lève avec le soleil ; je vais voir aux pièges ; s'il m'arrive quelques Sauvages, je traite de leurs pelleteries, puis je mange du *tollibi* (espèce de poisson blanc), trois fois par jour. Voilà ! Je trouve le temps bien long et je crains que ma constitution ne soit sérieusement affectée par ce genre de vie ; mais qu'y faire ?

—“ Je fais des traines ; je plie du bois à raquettes, et, avec de la persévérance, je pense arriver à manier le couteau croche ! ”

Une vie semblable ne pouvait convenir à Alexandre MacKenzie ; sa nature intelligente et quelque peu intrigante se révoltait à l'idée de passer les plus belles années de sa vie dans une telle oisiveté intellectuelle. Toujours de sales Sauvages à recevoir, de la pacotille à échanger contre des pelleteries, des voyageurs à expédier à l'intérieur ; toujours pour société des hommes

sans instruction et quelquefois vicieux. L'ennui, la plus triste des maladies, le rongait ; il se sentait comme déclassé et inutile.

Il fallait à son ambition des horizons plus vastes, à son activité un champ plus large et des territoires nouveaux à explorer ; en un mot, la fièvre des voyages et des découvertes s'était emparée de lui et il résolut de contribuer à la découverte du fameux passage du Nord, si ce passage existait, et d'atteindre l'Océan Glacial.

De grands obstacles s'opposaient à la mise à exécution de ses projets. Comme Bourgeois hivernant, il dépendait entièrement de la Compagnie du Nord Ouest, qui n'était en aucune manière tenue de favoriser de semblables entreprises, lesquelles appartenaient plutôt à la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, et étaient même une des conditions imposées par sa charte.

Il y avait aussi, il faut le dire, dans la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest des hommes puissants qui ne voyaient pas sans regret l'ascendant que M. MacKenzie prenait sur ses collègues, et qui n'auraient pas demandé mieux que de le frustrer dans ses plans en faisant manquer une entreprise qui, si elle réussissait, ne pouvait qu'augmenter le prestige et l'influence du jeune Ecossais. Cependant, Alexandre MacKenzie finit par vaincre les obstacles et obtenir de ses collègues la permission d'entreprendre son voyage, pourvu que les intérêts de la Compagnie, dans le Département, n'en souffrissent pas.

Il avait déjà depuis quelque temps jeté les yeux sur son ami, Roderic McKenzie, pour le remplacer à Athabaska ; mais celui-ci avait pris la détermination de laisser le Nord-Ouest, n'y trouvant pas assez d'encouragement et de chances suffisantes d'avancement. Il lui communiqua, cependant, en confidence, le projet qu'il avait formé d'atteindre l'Océan Glacial par les grandes rivières que les Sauvages lui disaient devoir exister au Nord, ajoutant qu'il avait compté sur son amitié, et serait obligé de renoncer à son projet s'il persistait à se retirer.

M. R. McKenzie fit volontiers le sacrifice demandé de lui, et se prépara à suivre son ami à Athabaska, où il devait le remplacer pendant son absence. Cette décision généreuse cimenta la grande amitié qui exista toujours dans la suite entre les deux cousins, et reçut sa récompense plus tard, car M. Roderic McKenzie, en restant au service de la Compagnie, sut s'y attirer l'estime et le respect de tous ses co-associés, acquérir le plus haut rang dans la Compagnie, dont il devint bientôt un des principaux agents, et parvenir enfin au but de l'ambition des hommes les plus marquants du commencement de ce siècle, être nommé membre du Conseil Législatif du Bas-Canada.

A leur arrivée à l'ancien établissement de M. Pond, sur la Rivière La Biche, à trente milles du Lac des Buttes (1), M. A. MacKenzie fit, avec toute la diligence

(1) Appelé par les Anglais *Lake of the Hills*, et plus tard *Athabaska*. L'ancien Athabasca est un petit lac tout auprès et à l'Ouest. Les Sauvages l'appelaient Aya-baska à cause des grandes herbes qui en couvraient les bords, et les "voyageurs" en ont fait "Rabaska."

possible, l'expédition des articles de traite du Département, pendant que M. Roderic McKenzie s'occupait de faire construire, sur le lac même, un nouveau fort qu'il nomma Fort Chipewean parce qu'il était plus particulièrement destiné à la traite avec les Sauvages de ce nom. *After making every possible enquiry and taking every necessary precaution*, dit M. R. McKenzie, dans ses "Reminiscences", *I pitched upon a conspicuous projection which advanced about a league into the Lake, the base of which appeared in the shape of a person sitting with arms extended, the palms forming, as it were, a point. On this we settled and built a Fort which we called Chipewean. It is altogether a beautiful healthy situation, in the center of many excellent and never failing fisheries, provided they are duly attended to at the proper season,*—considération importante dans ces tristes régions où le poisson était à peu près la seule ressource des Bourgeois et de leurs employés pendant les longs mois d'hiver.

Le Fort Chipewean devint bientôt le plus important du Nord ; c'est de là que rayonnaient toutes les expéditions de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest vers les Montagnes Rocheuses par la Rivière la Paix, et vers l'Océan Glacial par la Rivière MacKenzie. M. R. MacKenzie s'est plu à orner ce fort avec tout le luxe possible dans ces tristes régions ; il en fit même peindre l'intérieur, au grand étonnement des voyageurs et des Sauvages.

Les anciens Bourgeois se sont longtemps souvenus du vieux Fort Chipewean ; ils en parlaient avec plaisir et

orgueil, car M. R. McKenzie, avec les habitudes studieuses que ses amis lui ont connues, en avait fait non seulement "l'emporium du Nord", mais même "la petite Athènes des régions hyperboréennes". Les rayons de la jolie bibliothèque du Fort pliaient sous le poids de livres nombreux et bien choisis.

Quelques années plus tard, M. R. McKenzie ayant cessé d'être Bourgeois hivernant pour accepter la position d'agent de la Compagnie, ces richesses lentement accumulées furent dispersées aux quatre vents, et c'est à peine si, peu de temps après, on eût pu trouver quelques lambeaux de livres et de journaux gisant dans les greniers, aux milieu de vieux agrès de pêche.

"La bibliothèque d'Athabasca", écrivait, en 1815, M. Wentzel, un des commis de la Compagnie, à R. McKenzie, "est aussi, je puis le dire, non seulement négligée, mais presque entièrement détruite ; à peine y trouve-t-on un ouvrage complet. L'on serait porté à croire, en réfléchissant sur toutes ces tristes circonstances, que tout s'enchaîne dans la déchéance de notre Athabasca, naguère si brillant, l'école et les délices du Nord. Nos Canadiens, qui, autrefois, étaient si attachés au poste qu'ils en avaient même oublié la mère-patrie, sont maintenant dégoutés et se hâtent d'amasser leur argent le plus tôt possible." (1)

(1) Le Fort Chippewean actuel est situé au nord du Lac ; celui que construisit M. McKenzie fut abandonné vers 1820.

Le 3 juin 1789, M. Alexandre MacKenzie, accompagné de quatre Canadiens, d'un Allemand et de deux femmes, s'embarquait sur un léger canot d'écorce pour son périlleux voyage aux régions inexplorées du Nord.

Les noms de ces hardis voyageurs méritaient de passer à la postérité avec celui de leur chef, car s'il fallait du courage à cet homme énergique pour s'aventurer, dans un but purement scientifique, sur des eaux inconnues, ce courage était au moins soutenu par une éducation supérieure, et par l'ambition, ce puissant et légitime mobile des actions humaines, tandis que ses compagnons, obscurs et sans instruction, n'avaient, pour soutenir leur courage, que l'instinct de la discipline et leur dévouement à leur chef.

François Barrieau, Charles Ducette, Joseph Landry, Pierre de Lorme et John Steinbruck (1) devaient partager les travaux, les peines, les inquiétudes de leur maître sans participer à sa gloire.

M. MacKenzie, désirant faire servir l'expédition aux intérêts de la Compagnie aussi bien qu'à ceux de la science, avait demandé à M. Leroux de l'accompagner jusqu'au nord du Lac des Esclaves, afin d'y établir des relations permanentes avec les " Couteaux jaunes ". Il

(1) Ces noms se trouvent dans une note faite à la fin du second chapitre de la narration du voyage de Sir Alexander MacKenzie à l'Océan Glacial. Cependant, sur le premier feuillet de l'exemplaire in-quarto de ce livre, donné par l'auteur à M. Rodoric McKenzie, on voit, écrit de la main de ce dernier, un memorandum, disant que les cinq courageux voyageurs étaient François Barrieau, Joseph Cadieu, Charles Cadieu, Pierre De Lorme et John Steinbruck. Landry et Ducette auraient-ils porté, tous deux, le surnom de " Cadieu " ?

lui donna instruction d'y construire un fort sur une pointe de terre située à la décharge de la rivière descendant du Lac de la Marte; (1) puis l'on se sépara, après s'être donné rendez-vous pour l'automne suivant, rendez-vous auquel plusieurs n'ajoutèrent pas foi, car on disait les tribus du Nord cruelles et féroces.

S'il avait fallu un grand courage pour entreprendre une telle expédition, on conviendra qu'il en fallait un plus grand encore pour la continuer, si l'on songe que l'on devait naviguer pendant de longues semaines sur des rivières inexplorées, ayant pour guides des hommes qui n'avaient jamais vu le pays; vivre au jour le jour du produit de la chasse, afin d'économiser le précieux pémican pour le moment où la chasse manquerait, cachant une partie des provisions au milieu des îlots comme réserves pour le retour, au grand mécontentement des guides sauvages, qui, avec l'imprévoyance traditionnelle de leur race, lui disaient qu'il ne reviendrait pas de sitôt, si jamais il revenait, et qu'il valait mieux manger le pémican tout de suite et compter sur la chasse et la pêche pour le retour.

Deux ou trois *Plats Côtés de Chien*, qu'ils rencontrèrent, s'efforcèrent de les dissuader de continuer l'entreprise, leur faisant une peinture exagérée des difficultés de la navigation, et disant aux hommes que plusieurs hivers passeraient sur leurs têtes avant qu'ils aient pu

(1) L'ancien *Fort Providence*.

atteindre l'Océan, et qu'à leur retour, leurs cheveux auraient blanchi ; que, dans le bas d'une rivière qui coule vers le Nord, ils allaient rencontrer une race d'hommes terribles qui allaient les dévorer.

Une nature moins énergique se serait découragée ; mais M. MacKenzie était décidé à surmonter tous les obstacles, et surtout à vaincre, par la force même s'il le fallait, le mauvais vouloir des guides et des chasseurs qui, à tout moment, menaçaient de l'abandonner. Il fut vigoureusement soutenu par ses cinq Voyageurs, dont le courage et le dévouement ne lui firent pas un seul moment défaut, malgré les craintes et appréhensions que leur confiance dans leur chef ne pouvait entièrement éloigner de leur esprit.

Après quarante jours de travail, de souffrances et d'inquiétudes, il réussit à atteindre les grandes îles situées à l'embouchure du fleuve que l'on a appelé, pendant nombre d'années, "La Grande Rivière", mais qui porte aujourd'hui le nom du hardi voyageur. Il les nomma "Iles de la Baleine".

Le 24 août, malgré les sinistres prévisions du printemps, M. MacKenzie retrouva M. Leroux au Lac des Esclaves ; le 12 septembre, il arriva au Fort Chipewean où M. McLeod était à continuer les travaux de construction du fort. N'y trouvant pas son ami Roderic, qui n'était pas encore revenu du Grand Portage avec les effets de traite pour l'hiver, il vint au-devant de lui. Les deux amis se rencontrèrent aux Fourches

de l'Athabasca, et passèrent l'hiver ensemble au Fort Chippewean.

Pendant l'été 1790, M. MacKenzie descendit au Grand Portage pour assister à l'assemblée générale des Bourgeois, qui devait décider de la réorganisation de la Compagnie. Le séjour qu'il y fit ne fut pas de nature à l'encourager à rester dans cette association dont plusieurs membres ne semblaient pas apprécier le relief qu'il lui avait donné par son expédition à la Mer Polaire. *My expedition was hardly spoken of*, écrivait-il à son ami, le 16 juillet 1790, *but it is what I expected*. Il laissa le Grand Portage le cœur triste, et reprit son poste l'âme remplie d'amertume contre ses collègues.

Il fut décidé à la réunion de 1790 de réorganiser la Compagnie pour neuf ans, mais sur des bases nouvelles. Quelques Bourgeois prirent leur retraite, et leurs parts furent acquises par leurs collègues, de sorte que tous les intérêts de la puissante compagnie se trouvèrent réunis entre les mains de dix Bourgeois. MM. Simon McTavish et Joseph Frobisher eurent trois actions chacun ; MM. Gregory, Montour, R. Grant, Small, A. Mackenzie, P. Pangman, deux actions chacun ; M. W. McGillivray, une, et M. Sutherland, une. Les deux premiers, les seuls membres de la société McTavish-Frobisher, depuis la mort de M. Benjamin Frobisher, devaient, avec M. Gregory, continuer d'être les agents de la Compagnie.

Il y eut peu de changements parmi les commis ou chefs de postes secondaires, qui reçurent des salaires de cent à deux cents louis. Dans quelques postes difficiles, on ne donnait pas de salaire, mais on accordait aux commis une part dans les profits, qui s'élevait quelquefois à la moitié de la traite. On espérait, par ce moyen, exciter leur émulation dans la grande lutte qui se préparait contre la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson.

L'extension rapide du trafic canadien dans le Nord-Ouest finit par causer de vives inquiétudes à la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, qui avait jusqu'alors joui sans entraves et sans opposition sérieuses, du monopole qui lui avait été accordé plus d'un siècle auparavant.

Se croyant bien assurée que, de longtemps, les marchands canadiens, laissés à leurs seules ressources, privés de l'appui de l'Etat, et, le plus souvent, divisés entr'eux, ne pourraient entrer en lutte contre sa puissante organisation ; appuyée d'une charte royale qui lui accordait les privilèges les plus étendus et les plus exclusifs, elle jouissait en paix du monopole de la traite avec les tribus du Nord, lorsque M. Frobisher vint intercepter le courant de ces relations au Portage la Traite, et réveiller la compagnie privilégiée de sa longue léthargie.

Jusqu'alors, celle-ci s'était contentée de construire quelques forts sur les bords de la Baie d'Hudson et dans le voisinage, obligeant les Sauvages à entreprendre, accompagnés de leurs femmes et de leurs enfants, des voyages pénibles et périlleux de six à sept mois pour

porter à ses comptoirs leurs pelleteries, livrées à des prix fabuleusement bas, et devenus encore plus faibles après la Cession par le reflûment des tribus du Sud et de l'Ouest vers la Baie. Elle ne pouvait, cependant, sans risquer de voir son commerce bientôt anéanti, rester plus longtemps indifférente aux progrès faits par les traiteurs canadiens.

En 1774, elle avait chargé M. Hearne d'établir le fort Cumberland auprès du poste créé par M. Frobisher un an auparavant, mais elle en était restée là, semble-t-il, jusqu'après la formation de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest.

En 1786, voulant empêcher les Sauvages de la "hauteur des terres" d'aller traiter avec les Canadiens du district de Nepigon, elle fonda le fort Osnaburg sur le lac Saint-Joseph. En 1789, elle fit un effort, infructueux cependant; pour s'établir sur les bords de l'Assiniboine; on vit même de ses serviteurs sur les rives du lac des Bois, en 1793.

Cette résistance tardive obtint des résultats à peu près nuls dans le Sud et dans l'Ouest, mais elle causa d'immenses embarras aux marchands canadiens dans les départements du Nord, et les força bientôt à chercher de nouveaux champs d'exploitation sur les bords de la Rivière la Paix et du Grand Lac des Esclaves.

Les Sauvages du Nord, qui n'avaient jamais connu les Français, avaient tellement l'habitude de ces interminables voyages à la Baie, qu'on ne put que difficilement

leur faire comprendre qu'il était de leur intérêt de rester dans leurs terres pour trafiquer de leurs pelleteries. M. Mackenzie, écrivant aux agents de la Compagnie, quelques jours avant son départ pour l'Océan Glacial, dit :

“ Vous verrez, par le compte, qu'il reste plus de marchandises ici (au Lac Athabasca) qu'il n'en faut pour une autre année ; il ne faudrait envoyer par conséquent que le nombre de canots suffisant pour descendre les pelleteries. Huit canots avec les cinq de l'intérieur sont plus qu'il n'en faut pour ce que le pays peut produire.

“ Il faut dans cette région compter surtout sur la Rivière La Paix et non sur les Chipewéans, car ils seront toujours disposés à porter une grande partie de leurs pelleteries à la Baie d'Hudson ”.

Les marchands canadiens et leurs employés, mécontents de la résistance qui leur était faite, irrités de la prétention de leurs adversaires à des droits exagérés, fatigués surtout des difficultés qu'offrait l'immense distance qu'ils avaient à parcourir pour entrer en compétition avec leurs plus fortunés rivaux, eurent trop souvent recours, pour compenser ces désavantages, à des moyens que l'honnêteté réprouve. On doit surtout leur reprocher l'introduction des boissons enivrantes, presque inconnues jusqu'alors dans l'intérieur. Ce fut un des griefs les plus sérieux que Lord Selkirk et ses amis formulèrent contre eux, lors des grandes querelles de 1813 et de 1814.

On était d'ailleurs peu scrupuleux dans ces temps de lutte acharnée. L'éloignement des centres de la civilisation et du contact de leurs égaux semblait avoir émoussé les sentiments de délicatesse et de droiture chez des hommes d'ailleurs connus pour leur honorabilité. Ils se reprochaient souvent à eux-mêmes les expédients auxquels ils se disaient réduits par la nature même de la traite dans les pays d'En Haut.

On se rappelle comment, en 1772, M. Frobisher avait arrêté au Fort la Traite les Sauvages qui se rendaient à la Baie pour y payer leurs crédits, et la razzia qu'il fit de leurs pelleteries, qu'il acheta quoiqu'elles fussent promises par engagement formel à la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson. Cet exemple d'une honnêteté douteuse ne pouvait manquer de porter ses fruits et de donner le ton à la lutte que se firent plus tard les deux compagnies rivales.

“ Je donnai à Hequimiash, ” dit dans son journal M. McGillivray, “ une brassée de tabac et huit mesures de poudre et lui promis un habit lorsqu'il reviendrait au printemps, à la condition qu'il n'irait pas à la Baie d'Hudson, cet été, et n'y enverrait pas de pelleteries ; il doit aux Anglais 45 “ plus ” (1).

Ailleurs il dit dans le même journal : “ Le *Pavillon* est venu nous faire visite, et pendant les douze premiers

(1) Jusqu'à la réunion de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest avec celle de la Baie d'Hudson, en 1821, on distinguait les employés des deux compagnies par “ Anglais ” et “ Français. ” Les Français étaient ceux de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, qu'ils fussent Canadiens-français, Anglais ou Ecossais : ils étaient les successeurs des Français.

jours il nous arriva des Sauvages tous les jours, de sorte que nous les avons tous vus. A peu près la moitié avaient été à la Baie d'Hudson pendant l'été, et y avaient pris des crédits, et je crains bien qu'ils aient envie d'aller payer leurs dettes au printemps. Cependant, s'ils le font, ce sera parce que je n'aurai pas pu les en empêcher, soit par des promesses, soit par des menaces, si mes marchandises n'y réussissent pas."

Ce genre de lutte n'était pas sans causer certains scrupules, et des remords même, à ceux qui s'y livraient. M. Duncan Cameron, l'un des Bourgeois, racontant la visite qu'il fit au poste de la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson à Osnaburg, pour y prendre quelques objets qu'il y avait laissés en garde le printemps précédent, dit :

" Nous fûmes très poliment reçus par M. Goodwin, facteur en second du Fort Albany, qui y était en commandement dans le moment. Assitôt après notre entrée, deux Sauvages du Lac au Pin arrivèrent, nous informant qu'ils avaient eu de grandes difficultés à traverser les lacs, même avec leurs petits canots, vu que quelques-uns étaient presque à sec. (1) Je désirais beaucoup avoir une chance de leur parler, mais c'était presque impossible, car ils étaient presque continuellement surveillés par l'interprète.

" M. Goodwin m'ayant invité à passer la nuit, vu qu'il faisait une violente tempête, et que la pluie tombait

(1) La région située autour du lac Népigon est couverte de petits lacs transformés en marais aux eaux basses.—Journal de D. Cameron, 1804.

par torrents, je réussis cependant, pendant la soirée, à parler à l'un d'eux, et à l'inviter à venir à ma tente, le lendemain, avec son frère, lui faisant comprendre que j'avais quelque chose à leur dire et un présent à leur faire, sachant bien qu'un Sauvage est peu influencé par les paroles si ces paroles ne sont accompagnées de quelque chose de plus substantiel. Ils me le promirent.

“Celui qui ne connaît pas la nature du trafic des Pays d'En Haut sera porté à juger très sévèrement de ma conduite, et à dire que j'ai bien mal payé de retour l'hospitalité courtoise que j'ai reçue ; j'admets que je me le reproche, quoique je n'aie fait que suivre la coutume du pays, qui serait tout à fait inexcusable ailleurs et dans d'autres circonstances.

“M. Goodwin cacha même nos effets de manière à nous forcer de rester jusqu'après le déjeuner. Quoique notre tronpe fut nombreuse — huit hommes à part M. Dougal Cameron et moi,—il nous traita avec la plus grande libéralité. A notre départ, les deux Sauvages étaient encore couchés ivres-morts, après avoir fait le train toute la nuit et avoir été insolents aux Anglais. Ces gens ont véritablement la patience de Job, et se rendent esclaves des Sauvages qui viennent à leur fort. Nous les tenons plus à distance, ce qui les rend plus respectueux pour nous que pour les Anglais”.

Grâce à son prestige et à la force de l'habitude, la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson réussit à maintenir ses relations avec les Sauvages de la Rivière aux Anglais,

du Lac Athabasca et des pays situés à l'Est jusqu'à la Baie ; mais elle conduisit son opposition trop mollement dans les pays qui se trouvaient en dehors de son influence immédiate, pour pouvoir y espérer de succès. Elle n'était d'ailleurs pas préparée à la lutte ; ses employés supérieurs y mettaient moins de zèle que les Bourgeois et associés canadiens, qui avaient un intérêt plus immédiat dans la traite.

Habitués à la vie comparative et facile des factoreries de la Baie, où ils régnaient sans conteste, n'ayant aucune préoccupation au sujet de leurs approvisionnements, qui leur étaient régulièrement expédiés, il leur était difficile de se faire à l'existence de privations et de fatigues à laquelle se soumettaient assez volontiers les commis de la compagnie canadienne, la plupart jeunes gens vigoureux et instruits, désireux surtout de faire leur chemin et de parvenir aux premiers postes, d'atteindre même, s'il était possible, le but tant ambitionné de tous, devenir Bourgeois de la Compagnie.

Les employés subalternes de la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson étaient pour la plupart de braves gens, intelligents et soigneux, bons envers les Sauvages, mais préférant des occupations paisibles à une vie d'aventures ; très gauches, et se passant assez difficilement du confort des postes et de leurs rations habituelles. Ils avaient, en un mot, comme leurs chefs, toutes les qualités qui convenaient au service des stations du voisinage de

la Baie, mais aucune de celles qui étaient requises pour la compétition dans l'intérieur.

Les " voyageurs ", au contraire, étaient vifs, intelligents, adroits, insoucians, peu scrupuleux, sobres lorsqu'il le fallait, mais parfois, aussi, gourmands à pouvoir dévorer une ration de huit livres de viande ! C'étaient les hommes de la vie d'aventure. Aux postes paisibles de la Baie d'Hudson, ils auraient fait de tristes et peu recommandables serviteurs ; dans l'intérieur du pays ils ont fait la fortune de leurs maîtres et Bourgeois.

Il fallait bien ces compensations pour permettre à la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest de lutter avec quelque avantage contre sa puissante rivale, qui, par ses forts sur la Baie, se trouvait à proximité de ses bases d'approvisionnement, et qu'un court voyage de trois mois transportait dans le cœur même du pays qu'elle voulait exploiter. Quelques postes sur la Baie, deux à trois cents hommes pour les garder et surveiller les Sauvages, deux ou trois navires pour le transport des marchandises et des pelleteries, telle était toute l'organisation requise.

Il en était bien autrement des Français, obligés de se diviser et de se subdiviser sur toute l'étendue des territoires, et ayant à leur solde une armée de deux à trois mille engagés de tous rangs : commis chargés de la surveillance et de la conduite de leurs postes devenant tous les ans plus nombreux ; interprètes ; voyageurs pour hâler les marchandises et pelleteries à travers les marais,

les rapides, les portages des innombrables cours d'eau qui sillonnaient le pays depuis le Lac Supérieur jusqu'à la Rivière MacKenzie ; " Mangeurs de lard " chargés des transports en canot, de Montréal au Grand Portage ; chasseurs attachés aux différentes expéditions de traite, afin de les pourvoir de gibier, et ainsi économiser le précieux pémican.

Les " Français " de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest avaient à lutter contre des privations, des misères et des difficultés que l'on aurait crues insurmontables, pour pénétrer dans l'intérieur, et leurs marchandises y entraient en compétition avec celles des " Anglais " de la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson dans des conditions tout à fait défavorables.

Sir Alexandre MacKenzie, dans son histoire du commerce des pelleteries, dit que les agents de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest envoyaient leurs commandes en Angleterre au mois d'octobre, après l'arrivée des pelleteries de l'année.

Les marchandises, expédiées de Londres au mois de mars de l'année suivante, arrivaient en juin à Montréal, où il fallait, pour faciliter les transports à bras dans les portages, les assortir par ballots (*packs*) de 80 à 90 livres, selon les besoins des différents postes.

Ce travail se faisait à Montréal, pendant l'automne et l'hiver, et, au mois de mai suivant, les ballots étaient expédiés de Lachine, en canots, et n'arrivaient à destination qu'à l'automne, quelquefois même très tard, pour

être convertis en pelleteries pendant l'hiver. Ces pelleteries n'arrivaient à Montréal que dans le courant de l'automne de la troisième année, et étaient expédiées en Angleterre dans le mois de mars de la quatrième année, et payées en juin. C'est-à-dire que la compagnie, à cause de l'immense distance à parcourir et de la lenteur des transports, était obligée de faire ses déboursés plus de trois ans avant de pouvoir rentrer dans ses fonds.

IV.

La Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson charge M. Turner d'une exploration dans l'ouest.—Voyage d'Alexandre MacKenzie à l'Océan Pacifique.

Nous avons déjà vu que M. Peter Pond avait fait préparer, dès son arrivée auprès du Lac Athabasca, une carte générale du pays, qu'il désirait présenter à l'Impératrice de Russie. Ce hardi traiteur avait une intelligence et un esprit d'initiative tout à fait remarquables, mais il manquait de connaissances suffisantes pour le travail qu'il avait entrepris.

N'ayant pas à sa disposition les instruments nécessaires, ou ne sachant pas s'en servir, il fut contraint de prendre ses renseignements des Sauvages, et de calculer ses distances sur les rapports des voyageurs qui, presque invariablement, comptaient par lieues, qu'il était de leur

intérêt de faire très courtes, et que les lenteurs et difficultés de la route rendaient toujours trop longues.

C'est en calculant sur ces fausses données qu'il plaça le fort qu'il avait fait construire sur la rivière La Biche, à une distance tellement considérable de la Baie d'Hudson et du Grand Portage, que, prenant pour base de comparaison les découvertes faites par le capitaine Cook quatre ans auparavant, le Lac Athabasca ne se trouvait plus éloigné que de quarante à cinquante lieues des bords de l'Océan Pacifique.

On comprend facilement la grande influence que des données semblables devaient exercer sur l'esprit de ceux qui rêvaient déjà une route commerciale à travers le continent : l'Océan Pacifique ne se trouvait plus, pour eux, qu'à une distance comparativement rapprochée de la Baie d'Hudson et des eaux de l'Atlantique.

La Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, à qui il appartenait plus particulièrement, en vertu de sa charte, de pousser avec énergie les explorations propres à développer le commerce du Nord, fut requise de faire les démarches nécessaires pour s'assurer de l'exactitude des données de M. Pond. (1)

Depuis longtemps, cependant, la soif des découvertes, l'esprit d'initiative s'étaient éteints chez les directeurs de cette puissante compagnie, qui, à part l'expédition

(1) Après avoir laissé le Nord-Ouest, M. Pond retourna avec Etats-Unis, où il mit les connaissances qu'il possédait sur le pays à la disposition du commissaire américain chargé, en 1793, de délimiter la frontière, au delà des lacs, et lui indiqua même la ligne, à l'ouest du lac Supérieur, qui fut définitivement adoptée.

de M. Hearne, en 1769, n'avait encore rien fait pour mettre à exécution les promesses faites lors de l'octroi de sa charte, un siècle auparavant.

En 1785, elle avait fait un semblant d'effort dans cette direction, mais la personne qu'elle envoya était tellement incapable, que son expédition n'eût aucun résultat. Elle ne s'occupa sérieusement de la vérification, assez facile d'ailleurs, qui lui était demandée, qu'en 1791 ; et, à la pressante sollicitation du bureau colonial, elle se décida à confier l'entreprise à un astrologue, M. Turner, qu'elle fit accompagner par M. Ross, un de ses employés.

M. Turner, assez mal pourvu pour une expédition semblable, fut contraint de demander l'assistance et le concours des Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest. Ceux-ci, malgré les rapports plus que tendus qui existaient entre les deux compagnies, lui vinrent généreusement en aide. M. A. MacKenzie écrivit même au chef du poste de Chippewean de mettre le fort en ordre pour le recevoir avec ses gens, et de prendre charge de leurs effets, s'il en était requis, attendu que leur expédition était uniquement de découvertes. De fait M. Turner passa l'hiver au Fort Chippewean avec Rodéric McKenzie.

Cette expédition eut pour résultat de démontrer que le Lac Athabaska, au lieu d'être situé à peu de distance de l'Océan Pacifique, en était éloigné de plus de trois cents lieues, ce qui aurait pu être facilement vérifié

sans le coût d'une exploration spéciale, si l'on s'était adressé à la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, car l'année suivante, M. MacKenzie, avant de partir pour un second voyage, localisait très exactement le poste des "Fourches de la Rivière La Paix", cent lieues à l'ouest du Lac Athabaska.

Pendant que la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson employait ainsi M. Turner, M. A. MacKenzie, qui était devenu le personnage le plus important et le plus distingué de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, se préparait à réaliser le projet qu'il avait formé d'atteindre l'Océan Pacifique.

Sa grande ambition était de trouver une route commerciale à travers le continent, un passage par la Mer Glaciale ayant été, dit-il, reconnu impraticable. Cette route trouvée, il espérait, au moyen d'une forte association comprenant la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson et les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, et avec le concours et l'appui du gouvernement impérial, établir un commerce régulier que des organisations séparées ne pouvaient maintenir.

Dès le mois de mars 1791, il écrivit à son ami, M. R. McKenzie, qui était alors en expédition de traite auprès des "Castors" et des "Esclaves," lui demandant de faire une étude toute spéciale de leur pays, *and more particularly, disait-il, regarding a Grand River which is reported to run parallel with and falls into the sea to the West of the river I voyaged.*

Pendant le cours de l'hiver, il descendit à Montréal, et, sentant qu'il manquait des connaissances nécessaires pour faire, avec avantage, une exploration dans le genre de celle qu'il voulait entreprendre, il n'hésita pas à s'imposer un voyage d'outre-mer.

Il se rendit en Angleterre, s'y choisit les livres et les instruments nécessaires, apprit à s'en servir, et revint à Montréal pendant l'été. A l'automne, cet homme énergique et de cinquante ans en avant de son temps, était de retour auprès de son ami, au Fort Chippewean, et il se rendait, avant l'hiver, jusqu'aux Fourches de la Rivière la Paix, pour gagner du temps et être prêt à s'embarquer à la débâcle.

La Compagnie n'étant nullement tenue à des entreprises comme celle qu'il projetait, il s'empressa d'y faire construire un poste de traite, et d'y nouer des relations avec les Sauvages des environs, afin de faire bénéficier ses associés, en quelque mesure, des sacrifices qu'il allait leur imposer.

Il passa un hiver pénible aux "Fourches". Son esprit était continuellement ballotté entre le désir de réaliser son entreprise et la crainte des obstacles qui se dressaient devant lui.

Il n'était pas sans connaître le sentiment de jalousie qui existait contre lui chez quelques Bourgeois importants de la Compagnie, à cause de l'ascendant irrésistible qu'il prenait, jeune homme encore, sur ses collègues. Caractère impétueux, volonté de fer, intel-

ligence supérieure, il possédait plus qu'il ne fallait pour se créer des adversaires parmi les plus importants et les plus riches de la Compagnie, et il craignait leur influence durant son absence.

M. MacKenzie se trouvait aussi embarrassé pour se trouver des guides, des interprètes, et surtout un lieutenant sur lequel il pût compter. Il tenait beaucoup à s'assurer les services de M. Alexander Mackay, en qui il avait la plus grande confiance, et qui n'arriva aux Fourches que quelques semaines avant le temps fixé pour le départ. Ainsi harassé, il ne put terminer ses préparatifs que la veille même de son départ, le 8 mai, et il expédia, ce jour-là, six canots au Fort Chippewean avec sa traite de l'hiver et une lettre à son ami, où il dit une partie de ses ennuis. Voici cette lettre :

“ Dear Rory,

“ *I have been so vexed and distracted of late, that I cannot sit down to any thing steadily. The Indians in general have dissappointed me in their hunt. I have had great trouble to procure young men to accompany me in my expedition : none of them like it ; at length I prevailed on three ; a fourth was desirous to go, but I would not take him, and to be revenged, he induced my guide to run away, and both have dissappeared last evening.*

“ *The two remaining Indians know no more of the country than I do myself, and it may be that they are on the eve of following the example of the others, for no dependance can be placed on the promises of any of this people.*

Without the help of Indians, I have little hope of success. . The guide who deserted was acquainted with another large river to the West of this, at a distance of two days march, but the great difficulty is to find that river out ! at any rate we are too far advanced in the undertaking not to make the attempt....."

9th May.

" All is ready now for Delorme's departure ; he may overtake the other canoes on the way. I intend to leave this in the afternoon ;—to morrow will be Friday "....

" I send you a couple of guineas, the rest I take with me to trafic with the Russians. Alexander Mackay desires his compliments to you. I keep him so hard at work that he has no time to write you. May all happiness attend you. —Adieu."

" Dear Roderic,

" Yours unchangeably,

" ALEX. MACKENZIE."

Dans l'après-midi du 9 mai 1793, M. MacKenzie s'embarqua, sans guide, avec M. Mackay, six voyageurs : Joseph Landry, Charles Ducette, François Beaulieu, Baptiste Bisson, François Comtois, et Jacques Beauchamp, et deux Sauvages, qui devaient lui servir de chasseurs et d'interprètes.

Leur canot d'écorce avait été construit spécialement pour cette expédition. Long de vingt-cinq pieds, large de quatre et demi, il était cependant tellement léger

que deux hommes pouvaient le transporter plusieurs milles sans se reposer ; et si bien proportionné qu'on put y entasser trois milles livres pesant de provisions, munitions de chasse, présents pour sauvages, et bagages.

Inutile de relater les dangers continuels que ces hardis voyageurs eurent à affronter dans la rude et pénible montée de la Rivière à la Paix, et surtout dans les gorges des Montagnes Rocheuses, avant de pouvoir atteindre les rives tant désirées du "grand fleuve courant vers l'Ouest jusqu'à l'Océan". La relation de ce voyage par M. MacKenzie lui-même est très connue.

Dans sa première expédition, M. MacKenzie avait eu à lutter surtout contre le mauvais vouloir et les craintes chimériques de ses guides et l'hostilité plus ou moins prononcée des tribus échelonnées sur sa route ; mais dans cette affreuse traversée des Montagnes Rocheuses, il fut continuellement exposé à des dangers tels que ses hardis compagnons hésitèrent à plusieurs reprises à poursuivre leur route, et refusèrent même en deux ou trois circonstances de la continuer. Il fallut, plus d'une fois, toute la patience et toute l'énergie dont cet homme était capable pour surmonter leur répugnance et leurs craintes, et toute son influence pour leurs faire supporter les fatigues presque surhumaines qu'il partageait, d'ailleurs, largement avec eux.

Vers la source de la Rivière la Paix, une barrière presque infranchissable se dresse devant eux, un torrent de plusieurs milles, encaissé dans des montagnes abruptes,

rend toute tentative de hâlage impossible. Il envoie M. Mackay explorer la rivière : elle est trouvée impraticable. Non découragé, il fait comprendre à ses voyageurs abattus qu'il va falloir franchir à pied la hauteur des terres, et se frayer une route de trois lieues à travers la forêt et les rochers, pour transporter le canot, maintenant devenu lourd par de nombreuses réparations. Cette épreuve était terrible pour des hommes déjà épuisés de fatigue : ils se soumirent cependant sans trop murmurer, et, après deux jours de travail, ce premier obstacle sérieux était surmonté.

Dans un autre endroit, le canot, leur unique ressource, est mis en pièces dans un rapide ; les hommes qui le conduisaient, cramponnés aux débris flottants, sont entraînés l'espace de trois cents verges dans les eaux bouillonnantes.

Cet accident, qui lui fit perdre une partie de son équipement, lui fit craindre sérieusement pour le résultat de l'entreprise. Il se mit cependant, sans délai, à construire un nouveau canot, plus petit que le premier, et avec lequel il réussit enfin à traverser la hauteur des terres et à atteindre cette rivière tant désirée, " courant vers l'Ouest ".

Assez mal reçu d'abord par les indigènes du versant occidental des Montagnes Rocheuses, il réussit, cependant, par son courage personnel, et en se livrant seul entre leurs mains, à se les rendre favorables. Il apprit d'eux qu'un peu plus bas, le fleuve prenait

son cours vers le sud, et se jetait dans la mer, à un endroit où des hommes blancs étaient à se bâtir des maisons. Ils ajoutaient, cependant, que la navigation de cette rivière était en quelques endroits impossible, et que les tribus qui en habitaient les rives étaient si méchantes et si barbares qu'il ne pourrait arriver au terme de son voyage.

Ces informations peu rassurantes rappelèrent à M. MacKenzie celles qui lui avaient été données sur le compte des Esquimaux du fleuve McKenzie, et ne firent que stimuler son désir de continuer sa route, et affermir la résolution qu'il avait prise de tout risquer pour atteindre son but.

Il fit à ses hommes une harangue entraînante, leur rappelant les difficultés qu'ils avaient déjà surmontées ensemble, leur demandant s'ils allaient ternir cette belle réputation de courage qui faisait l'orgueil des " Voyageurs " ; s'ils allaient s'exposer à la disgrâce et à la honte en s'en retournant, eux, les braves des braves, sans avoir même vu de loin les côtes du Pacifique.

On peut obtenir beaucoup en flattant la vanité de l'homme. Les Voyageurs se sentirent émus, et un verre de rhum — d'ailleurs bien gagné — venant à propos stimuler leur courage, tous jurèrent d'accompagner leur chef jusqu'au bout du monde.

Après quelques jours d'une navigation moins pénible sur la rivière Tacoutche Tesse, qui devait porter plus

tard le nom de M. Simon Fraser, M. MacKenzie devint convaincu, par les renseignements qu'il reçut des Sauvages et par ses propres observations, que cette rivière ne devait se jeter dans la mer qu'à une grande distance au sud. Pousser au-delà dans cette direction, sans savoir s'il ne serait pas empêché d'effectuer son retour avant les glaces, eut été plus qu'imprudent. M. MacKenzie prit donc la détermination d'essayer d'atteindre la mer par terre.

Il fallait pour cela rebrousser chemin jusqu'à une rivière qu'il avait remarquée, descendant de l'Ouest, et qu'il nomma *West Road River*.

Cette décision pouvait avoir des résultats désastreux pour l'expédition ; mais il comprit que c'était sa seule ressource. Les indigènes qui, jusqu'alors, lui avaient été favorables, éprouvaient une admiration et une crainte superstitieuses pour cette poignée d'aventuriers courageux qu'ils considéraient comme des être supérieurs, omniscients, infaillibles ; et il fallait admettre devant eux que l'on avait failli, que l'on s'était trompé !

Il craignait aussi de voir le courage de ses compagnons se fondre à cet aveu pénible. Il les informa que sa résolution était irrévocable, qu'il allait retourner sur ses pas, mais pour entreprendre un voyage plus pénible encore, et que, si on l'abandonnait, il le continuerait seul. L'idée d'abandonner leur chef révolta les Voyageurs : ils lui promirent encore de le suivre.

L'expédition commença son mouvement rétrograde le 23 juin, (1) suivie des menaces des Sauvages sur lesquels on avait perdu tout contrôle, et, le 4 juillet, après avoir mis le canot en "fosse", et mis en "cache" tous les objets qui n'étaient pas de première nécessité, on continua l'expédition à pied.

" Il nous fallut porter sur nos dos, dit Sir Alexandre MacKenzie, quatre taureaux de pémican, pesant de quatre-vingt-cinq à quatre-vingt-dix livres chacun, ma boîte à instruments, un ballot de marchandises pour présents, pesant quatre-vingt-dix livres, et un ballot de munitions de même poids. Chaque voyageur portait à peu près quatre-vingt-dix livres, un fusil et des munitions. Les Sauvages avaient à peu près quarante-cinq livres de pémican à porter, à part leur fusil, ce qui les mécontenta beaucoup ; s'ils avaient osé, ils nous auraient immédiatement quittés.....
.....Ma charge, ainsi que celle de M. Mackay, se composait de vingt-deux livres de pémican, un peu de riz, de sucre, etc., formant en tout le poids de soixante-et-dix livres, à part les armes et les munitions. Mon télescope, placé en bandoulière sur mes épaules, m'embarrassait considérablement. Il fut décidé que nous nous contenterions de deux repas par jour".

Après des fatigues inouïes et seize jours d'une marche pénible, l'expédition arrivait enfin sur les bords tant désirés de l'Océan Pacifique.

(1) Le fort Alexandria fut plus tard construit à l'endroit où M. MacKenzie commença la retraite, et fut ainsi nommé en son honneur.

L'œuvre qui avait tant excité l'ambition de nos pères était accomplie ; les Montagnes Rocheuses avaient été franchies, et, dix ans avant l'expédition des capitaines Lewis et Clarke, (entreprise conduite sous les auspices du gouvernement américain,) un simple Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest et son commis, aidés de leurs " Voyageurs " canadiens-français, avaient atteint les rives de la " Grande Mer de l'Ouest."

M. MacKenzie traça en vermillon sur les rochers, ces simples mots qui devaient plus tard contribuer à nous assurer la possession de ces territoires : "*Alexander MacKenzie, from Canada, by land, the 22nd of July one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three ;*" et, le lendemain, il reprit la route du pays. Il arriva à la fin d'août à Fort Chippewean pour se remettre à la triste besogne de traitant, trouvant à peine le temps de coordonner ses notes et d'en préparer la copie qu'il destinait à son ami pour qu'il la révisât.

M. Roderic McKenzie, qui avait une instruction très solide et même brillante, lui fut d'une grande utilité, et l'aida puissamment à préparer le manuscrit du livre si peu prétentieux de forme, mais si consciencieux et si utile qui valut à son auteur la faveur royale.

Les fatigues du voyage et les privations que M. MacKenzie eut à subir pendant cet hiver, ébranlèrent considérablement sa santé ; il demeura presque continuellement sous l'effet d'une dépression nerveuse dont

il se ressentait encore au printemps. En mars il écrivait à son ami :

“.....*Last Fall, I was to begin copying it*”—son journal—“*but the greatest part of my time was engaged in vain speculation. I took such a habit of thinking so long on one subject that I, sometimes, walked backwards and forwards, musing for hours at the end of which I could not tell what it was about.*

“*Did I sit down to write, I was sure that the very thing I ought not to have been thinking about would occur to me instead of what I had to do. This one calling me to the garret, another to the cellar and some other to the shop kept me so busy doing nothing, that all I could do till the time I wrote you*”—en janvier—“*was to look over the men's accounts : In short, my mind was never at ease nor could I bend it to my wishes.*

“*Although I am not superstitious, my dreams caused me much annoyance. I could scarcely close my eyes without finding myself in company with the dead. I had visions of late which almost convince me that I have lost a near relation or friend.*

“*It was the latter end of January when I began my journal, believing then I had sufficient time before me, but the reverse is the case, and I shall feel satisfied, and so must you, if I can finish the copy for your perusal in the Spring. It is a work, I find, that requires, much more time than I was aware of, for it is not at this moment a quarter finishd....*”

M. MacKenzie descendit au Grand Portage avec les premiers canots du printemps, quittant définitivement les "pays d'En Haut" pour devenir un des agents de la Compagnie comme membre de la société McTavish, Frobisher et Cie. En cette qualité, il assistait aux réunions annuelles du Grand Portage, mais il ne remonta plus dans l'intérieur.

V

M. David Thompson quitte la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson de dégoût, et prend du service dans celle du Nord-Ouest.— Il reçoit instruction de relever la position géographique des postes de la compagnie du Nord-Ouest, en vue du traité de paix de 1783.—Son expédition.—Il localise les sources du Mississipi.—M. Roderic McKenzie relève la vieille route française par Kaministiquia.

Il y avait, à cette époque, au service de la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, un jeune homme d'un très-grand mérite, du nom de David Thompson. Il avait reçu, au *Blue coat school* de Londres, une éducation soignée, et avait montré dès ses plus jeunes années un goût très prononcé pour les études et les recherches historiques.

Son bonheur était de visiter, durant ses moments de loisir, les cloîtres de Westminster, et de s'y perdre en contemplation devant les nombreux monuments et les richesses architecturales qui y sont entassées.

Le temps étant venu de se créer une carrière, son esprit se tourna vers les voyages, et il ne vit rien de mieux à faire que de s'engager comme apprenti dans la puissante compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson. Au printemps de 1794, il s'embarquait sur un des navires de la Compagnie, en destination du Fort Churchill.

Il s'aperçut cependant bientôt qu'il avait fait fausse route, et que le service de cette compagnie n'était pas propre à créer un avenir digne de l'ambition d'un homme aventureux et intelligent. Son esprit se trouva bientôt à l'étroit dans cette organisation qui tenait avant tout à la réalisation de grands profits facilement acquis, et très peu aux découvertes et au progrès de la science.

Durant l'été de 1795, à force de supplications, il avait obtenu du chef du poste de Churchill l'autorisation de faire une expédition de découvertes vers l'Ouest, et s'était rendu, à travers les terres, au Lac Athabasca, accompagné d'un blanc et de deux Sauvages qui ne connaissaient pas le pays. (1)

Informé, à son retour, que la Compagnie ne pourrait plus, à l'avenir, encourager de semblables expéditions, il se sentit pris de dégoût, et se décida, comme l'avait fait douze années auparavant M. Umfreville, à laisser ses

(1) M. Thompson a laissé une très volumineuse relation de ses voyages et de ses observations tant au Lac Athabasca que dans les Montagnes Rocheuses et aux sources de la Rivière Mississippi. Cette précieuse relation est maintenant en la possession de M. Charles Lindsey, de Toronto, qui s'en est beaucoup servi dans son livre : *An investigation on the unsettled Boundary of Ontario*, et qui nous a fourni de nombreux renseignements sur ce hardi explorateur et habile astronome.

anciens maîtres et à chercher fortune dans une sphère d'action plus utile et plus conforme à ses aptitudes.

Accompagné de deux Sauvages, il laisse les bords de la Baie d'Hudson, prend la route du Lac Supérieur, et arrive au Grand Portage où il reçoit un accueil si parfait qu'il s'empresse de lier sa fortune à celle de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, dont il devint bientôt un des principaux Bourgeois.

Le traité de paix de 1783 avait fixé la frontière entre les Etats-Unis et le Canada, au nord de l'Ile Royale, et, le long des cours d'eau, du Lac Long au Lac des Bois ; puis, de l'extrémité nord-ouest du Lac des Bois, directement vers l'ouest, jusqu'aux bords du Mississipi.

Cette délimitation, nous l'avons dit, avait déjà inspiré des craintes à la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest et provoqué l'exploration faite en 1785 par M. Umfreville dans le but de découvrir, au nord, une voie de communication exclusivement canadienne.

Les expéditions américaines de traite ayant cependant pris peu d'extension dans cette direction, les marchands canadiens n'avaient pas d'abord été inquiétés dans la possession de leurs postes, qu'ils avaient même graduellement étendus à l'ouest et au sud.

Des doutes sérieux ayant, cependant, été soulevés au sujet du cours du Mississipi et de sa source dont devait définitivement dépendre la délimitation de la frontière, un traité de commerce fut conclu, en 1794, stipulant qu'une commission serait nommée pour s'assurer si une

ligne droite tirée de l'extrémité nord-ouest du Lac des Bois intersecterait le Mississipi : dans le cas contraire, la commission recevrait autorité de fixer elle-même la frontière selon l'intention du traité de 1784.

La Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, alarmée des conséquences qui pouvaient résulter de cette délimitation, et se trouvant avoir dans M. Thompson un homme tout-à-fait compétent, résolut de mettre à exécution le dessein qu'elle avait depuis quelque temps formé de relever la position géographique de ses différents postes, et surtout de ceux du sud et de l'ouest.

Après avoir vérifié la position des établissements des bords du Lac Winnipeg, de ceux du Lac Dauphin et de la Rivière au Cygne, M. Thompson se dirigea vers le sud, le but principal de son expédition.

Le 29 novembre 1797, il quittait les bords de l'Assiniboine, d'un endroit qui porte aujourd'hui le nom de Brandon, accompagné de huit "Canadiens" et d'un Sauvage, avec deux chevaux et trente chiens pour les transports; et, après un voyage très pénible à travers des prairies couvertes de neige, il arriva, le premier janvier, au pays des Mandanes, sur le Missouri.

De retour au fort de M. Macdonell, sur l'Assiniboine, M. Thompson prend quelques jours pour mettre en ordre ses notes de voyage et compléter ses calculs astronomiques, puis descend, avec trois hommes, jusqu'à la Rivière Rouge, dont il remonte le cours tortueux, et arrive le 14 mars au Fort Pembina, alors

confié aux soins de M. Charles Jean-Baptiste Chaboillez, un des Bourgeois de la Compagnie.

Il constata que ce poste était érigé à quelques milles au sud du 49ème degré de latitude, et, par conséquent, dans les limites de ce qui, selon toute probabilité, allait être reconnu territoire américain, et il conseilla à M. Chaboillez de le reconstruire plus au nord. Continuant sa course vers le sud, jusqu'à l'embouchure de la Rivière La Tortue, il trouva un autre poste de la Compagnie confié aux soins d'un M. Cadotte, probablement un des fils de Jean-Baptiste Cadotte, le vieil associé dont M. Henry avait tant eu à se féliciter.

La rivière étant libre de glace, il se procura un canot et se prépara à explorer, avec ses trois voyageurs, la région jusqu'alors presque inconnue des sources du Mississippi.

Après avoir remonté de quelques milles la Rivière du Lac Rouge, il prend à droite, à un endroit maintenant nommé Crookston, s'engage à l'encontre d'un fort courant dans la Rivière à l'Eau Claire, fait un pénible portage de plusieurs milles, débouche sur d'immenses plaines couvertes de l'eau des neiges fondantes, et arrive au Lac Rouge, où il trouve encore un poste de la Compagnie.

De fait, M. Thompson trouva la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest déjà en possession de tout le pays. Avec une énergie étonnante, elle s'était frayé un passage à travers les marais, par des endroits alors à peine prati-

cables, et avait établi des postes au Lac La Tortue, au Lac des Cèdres, au Lac des Sables. Toute la traite était entre ses mains.

Du Lac Rouge, il fallut faire tous les transports par terre jusqu'à celui de la Tortue, (1) où M. Thompson constata que les eaux prenaient leur cours vers le midi ; que, par conséquent, il était arrivé à la "hauteur des terres", et que les sources du Mississipi ne pouvaient être plus au nord.

Ayant atteint le but de son expédition, M. Thompson descendit le Mississipi, puis, prenant à gauche à travers les marais, il atteignit la Rivière Saint-Louis, portagea de superbes rapides, que nous avons pu admirer, en 1874, du haut d'un grand mais peu solide viaduc de chemin de fer, et arriva au milieu de mai à Duluth, poste de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, à l'extrémité du Lac Supérieur.

Vingt années ne s'étaient pas encore écoulées depuis que les traiteurs canadiens avaient adopté la route du Grand Portage, et déjà la vieille route française, par Kaministikia, était complètement oubliée. Nous avons vu qu'après le traité de 1783, la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest avait chargé M. Umfreville d'en chercher une nouvelle par le Népigon.

(1) M. Thompson donne le Lac La Tortue comme source du Mississipi ; la grande carte officielle de la Puissance, publiée en 1882 par le département des chemins de fer, fait sortir le grand fleuve de petits lacs situés plusieurs milles au sud.

Cette nouvelle route ayant, plus tard, été jugée presque impraticable, la Compagnie se trouvait dans un sérieux embarras, lorsque, en 1797, M. Roderic McKenzie, qui descendait en congé d'absence au Canada, apprit d'une famille sauvage qu'il rencontra près du Lac La Pluie, qu'il y avait, à peu de distance au nord, "une route bonne pour les grands canots," autrefois suivie par les blancs dans leurs expéditions de traite.

M. MacKenzie engagea immédiatement un de ces Sauvages pour guide, et arriva bientôt à Kaministikia, où il vit les restes incendiés du vieux fort français, et, à quelques milles plus haut, une chute qu'il compare au Niagara.

M. Simon McTavish écrivit à M. MacKenzie pour le féliciter et l'informer qu'il avait, au nom de la Compagnie, demandé au gouvernement une cession de terrain à Kaministikia, et qu'il deviendrait nécessaire d'y transporter bientôt ses quartiers généraux. Trois ans après, un fort y était construit, et, en 1807, on lui donnait le nom de Fort William en l'honneur de M. William McGillivray, devenu le personnage le plus marquant de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest.

On jugera de l'importance de ce fort par la description qu'en donne le Major Long dans la relation de son expédition dans l'ouest : "*It covered an area of two hundred yards square enclosed by a strong picket and fortified by three blockhouses. The accommodation was*

sufficient to receive forty partners, and at least as many clerks who being all attended by their families were provided with separate quarters." Deux cents convives pouvaient s'asseoir aux tables de la grande salle des festins !

VI.

Dissensions dans la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest.—Rivalité entre M. A. MacKenzie et M. Simon McTavish.—M. A. MacKenzie se met à la tête d'une compagnie en opposition, les "X. Y". —Lutte acharnée. — Mesure énergique prise par M. McTavish. —Extension considérable de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest. —Expédition de M. Larocque chez les Mandanes, au Missouri.

Le second terme de la coalition de 1784 venait d'expirer. Les germes de dissensions qui s'étaient déjà depuis plusieurs années manifestés parmi les chefs, devaient nécessairement amener la dissolution de la Compagnie.

Dès 1795 quelques Bourgeois s'étaient retirés et avaient entrepris un trafic indépendant sous les auspices d'une forte organisation sociale — MM. Forsyth, Richarson and Company — qui, depuis quelque temps déjà, avait entrepris la traite aux environs du Lac Supérieur.

Le plus grand nombre des Bourgeois avaient cependant tenu à l'ancienne organisation, notamment M

Alexandre McKenzie, qui ne pouvait dans le moment séparer sa cause de celle de ses associés, et qui consentit à l'arrangement de 1795, mais pour trois ans seulement, se réservant le droit de se retirer à l'expiration de ce terme, s'il le jugeait convenable.

Ces trois années furent une suite non interrompue d'ennuis, de froissements et de mécontentements entre lui, le plus populaire, le plus actif des Bourgeois, et M. Simon McTavish, le chef de la Compagnie et le plus puissant des agents.

Ces difficultés devinrent enfin intolérables, et à la réunion générale de 1799, au Grand Portage, M. MacKenzie avertit ses associés qu'il avait résolu de quitter la compagnie. Une discussion très violente entre les Bourgeois hivernants d'un côté, et les agents de l'autre, suivit cette déclaration. Les hivernants déclarèrent que M. MacKenzie avait seul leur confiance, et lui demandèrent de reconsidérer sa décision ; mais M. MacKenzie, comprenant que sa position comme agent et associé de M. McTavish était devenue impossible, maintint sa résolution. Il quitta immédiatement le Grand Portage, et M. Roderic McKenzie fut nommé à sa place.

Ces violentes discussions laissèrent dans l'esprit des agents et des Bourgeois hivernants, des traces profondes qui ne s'effacèrent jamais. M. McTavish ne put pardonner à la majorité les marques de défiance dont il avait été l'objet, et, le printemps suivant, les hivernants,

au lieu de ces longues et aimables lettres qu'ils recevaient presque tous individuellement avec la correspondance officielle, et qui les mettaient au courant des choses de ce monde, dont ils étaient complètement séparés quelquefois pour plusieurs années, reçurent la lettre suivante, indice d'un grand orgueil blessé :

“ *Montreal, 20 April, 1880.*

“ *Gentlemen,*

“ *Influenced by the personal regard I have long entertained for such of you as I had the pleasure of knowing sufficiently, I have been in the yearly habit of addressing several of the Gentlemen of the concern individually on the departure of the canoes from hence, as well to give them every information in my power as to express to them my wishes and thereby cultivate a friendship that I thought to be reciprocal.*

“ *From the occurrences that passed at the Portage last summer, I am sorry to find that I must for the future abridge my correspondence to that quarter and on the present occasion I shall make this letter suffice for the whole—yet it is but fair that I should explain the cause of giving up a practice in which I always experienced so much satisfaction.*

“ *You cannot be surprised that after so many years of the most zealous attachment and, I may add, of successful exertion in promoting the interests of the former and present North West Company, I feel hurt at the distrust*

and want of confidence that appeared throughout all your deliberations last season, and particularly at the attempt which was made to dictate to my House in the appointment of its agents at the portage, which interference on your part is not warranted by our contract with you,—on the contrary it rests with us to send up such of our Partners as we think will best answer the purpose ; and surely when our own interests are so deeply involved, we ought not to be suspected of making an improper selection by which the business might suffer.....

“ I feel confident that the agency for the Portage Department is now placed in as able hand as ever superintended your concern in that Quarter.

“ I have the honor to be,

“ Gentlemen,

“ Your faithful and humble servant,

“ SIMON MCTAVISH. ”

“ To the Gentlemen

The Wintering Partners of the

North West Company

At the Grand Portage.”

Immédiatement après son départ précipité du Grand Portage, M. MacKenzie passa en Angleterre, y fit publier la relation de ses voyages, qui lui valut un titre amplement mérité, et revint au Canada, en 1801, avec tout le prestige de ses succès et de ses honneurs, pour se mettre à la tête de la “ Nouvelle Compagnie du Nord-

Ouest", mieux connue dans le pays sous le nom de "*Sir Alexander MacKenzie & Co.*," et encore mieux sous celui de "X Y."

Alors recommença dans le Nord-Ouest une compétition rappelant les anciennes luttes d'avant 1784, et auprès de laquelle pâlisait la guerre que l'on faisait à la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson.

Le brigandage ne connut presque pas de bornes ; les combats de commis à commis, de voyageurs à voyageurs, devinrent à l'ordre du jour ; les boissons enivrantes furent livrées aux Sauvages avec profusion : elles remplacèrent même, dans biens des endroits, les articles utiles qui auparavant formaient au moins une partie considérable de la pacotille du traiteur.

M. McTavish, en laissant partir M. MacKenzie, avait mal calculé les forces de ce dernier, et ne se rendait pas compte du degré d'activité que son énergie donnerait à l'opposition de MM. Forsyth, Richardson et Cie. Il fut cruellement désabusé ; mais son caractère inflexible, aigri par les blessures faites à son amour-propre, l'empêcha de céder aux appréhensions de ses collègues. Tout au contraire, sa détermination grandit des obstacles qu'il trouvait sur son chemin, et, au lieu de céder, il résolut de vaincre à tout prix l'opposition qui lui était faite par ce qu'il appelait avec mépris *The Little Company*.

Il fit, en 1802, reconstituer l'ancienne Compagnie sur de nouvelles bases, et élargir le cercle de ses opérations.

Du sang nouveau fut introduit dans l'organisation ; les commis les plus méritants furent promus au rang de Bourgeois ; et, afin de bien faire comprendre qu'il n'y avait plus d'espoir d'entente, l'arrangement de 1802 fut signé pour vingt ans.

Grâce à cette direction ferme et énergique, la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest put, malgré la lutte acharnée que lui firent ses moins nombreux, mais non moins courageux adversaires, continuer à étendre avec vigueur la sphère de ses opérations.

Un de ses employés, M. Livingston, qui avait déjà, en 1796, établi un poste à près de cent milles au nord du Lac des Esclaves, entreprit de poursuivre encore plus au nord ses explorations. Encouragé par la découverte de quelques lingots d'argent qu'il avait faite dans ces régions peu d'années auparavant, il voulut explorer les pays environnants pour s'assurer s'il y existait quelques gisements considérables, et en même temps pour nouer des relations avec les Esquimaux, les moins bien disposés des Sauvages du Nord. Après quelques jours seulement de marche il fut massacré par ces Sauvages (les Esquimaux) ainsi que ses compagnons, James Sutherland, Jacques Beauchamp, Joseph Ayotte, Nicolas Demers et deux Sauvages.

Des expéditions furent aussi envoyées au Missouri et vers les sources de la Saskatchewan du sud. Il paraît même qu'un poste fut établi à cette époque sur la

rivière des Arcs,—*Bow-River*,—au milieu des tribus les plus guerrières et les plus féroces de l'Ouest. (1)

Les vastes pêcheries du Saint-Laurent et de l'intérieur ne pouvaient rester inexploitées aux portes mêmes des comptoirs de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest. (2) M. Mc-Tavish prend à rente les anciens postes du Roi pour le prix de mille louis par an, et les employés de la Compagnie s'établissent au Lac Saint-Jean et sur l'Assamouchouan à quatre-vingt-dix milles au-dessus de la décharge de cette rivière. Ils se rendent même au Lac Mistassini, à quelques jours de marche seulement des postes de la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson.

Non content de ces preuves de son énergie indomptable, le digne rival de Sir Alexandre MacKenzie se décide à attaquer la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson chez elle, afin de lui prouver que la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest ne reconnaissait aucunement ses droits exclusifs à la traite.

Au printemps de 1803, il envoie le *Beaver*, goëlette de cent cinquante tonneaux, à la Baie d'Hudson, pour y faire la traite sous les canons mêmes des forts des "Anglais", et fait, en même temps, préparer des expé-

(1) Lettre de M. William McGillivray à M. Alexandre Fraser, datée du 25 juillet 1804, en la possession de M. Alphonse Pouliot, professeur à l'Université Laval.

Ce poste est probablement le *Old Bow Fort*, situé au-dessus de Calgary (emplacement de l'ancien Fort Brisebois,) et à l'embouchure de la rivière Kananaskis, tel qu'indiqué sur la carte générale des territoires du Nord-Ouest, publiée en 1882 sous les auspices de Sir John Macdonald, alors ministre de l'Intérieur.

(2) Les bureaux principaux de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest étaient à Montréal, dans l'édifice maintenant occupé par l'Hôtel du Canada, rue Saint-Gabriel.

ditions par terre, leur donnant instruction de suivre la voie des lacs Saint-Jean et Mistassini, autrefois suivie par les Français, et de s'entendre avec le commandant du *Beaver* pour l'établissement de stations dans la Baie même.

Deux postes furent en conséquence établis, l'un sur l'île Charlton et l'autre à l'embouchure de *Moose River*. (1) Il paraît, cependant, que ces expéditions n'eurent pas un grand succès au point de vue des intérêts financiers de la Compagnie. Bon nombre de Bourgeois étaient peu favorables à des entreprises aussi en dehors des traditions de la Compagnie, et ces postes furent abandonnés peu de temps après.

M. McTavish ne devait pas voir les résultats des efforts presque surhumains qu'il avait faits pour écraser ses adversaires et étendre le contrôle de la Compagnie sur toutes les parties connues de l'Amérique anglaise. Cet homme vraiment remarquable avait amassé une fortune colossale pour l'époque. Il acheta la seigneurie de Terrebonne et se proposait de mener une vie de faste, comme seuls les *Nor-Westers* le savaient faire, lorsque la mort vint l'arracher, jeune encore, à ses nombreux amis et admirateurs.

Il mourut en juillet, 1804, avant d'avoir pu terminer cette princière demeure qu'il s'était fait construire au

(1) Lettre d'instruction de MM. McTavish, Frobisher et Cie, les agents de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, à M. Alexander Fraser, datée du 10 avril 1803, en la possession de M. Alphonse Pouliot, professeur à l'Université Laval.

“ Pied de la Montagne ”, à Montréal, et dont les ruines firent pendant un demi siècle l’effroi des enfants et des âmes trop crédules. Le “ Château hanté des McTavish ” eut, en 1860, le sort des grandes résidences des puissants du Nord-Ouest : *Burnside*, *Beaver Hall*, etc ; il fut démoli, et sur son emplacement on éleva la superbe demeure d’un de nos compatriotes également distingué, enlevé, lui aussi, beaucoup trop tôt au Canada : Sir Hugh Allan. Le monument sous lequel repose le corps de M. McTavish est tout ce qui reste pour rappeler le souvenir de cet énergique marchand.

A l’automne de 1804, M. Chaboillez, (1) le “ Bourgeois ” en charge du Département de l’Assiniboine, entreprit de pousser la traite au sud-ouest, jusque sur les territoires des Etats-Unis, et au-delà du Missouri. L’expédition fut confiée à M. François-Antoine Larocque, ayant sous ses ordres deux commis de la Compagnie : MM. Lachance et Charles McKenzie, et quatre Voyageurs : William Morrisson, Joseph Azure, J.-Bte Turenne et Alexis McKay.

Le 11 novembre, la petite troupe partit le plus secrètement possible, afin de ne donner l’éveil ni aux oppo-

(1) M. Charles-Jean-Baptiste Chaboillez, quoique déjà âgé, aimait la vie des “ hibernants ”, et “ faisait son tour dans le Nord-Ouest ” comme les plus jeunes Bourgeois. Il mourut à Terrebonne, en 1809, laissant trois filles, dont l’une épousa M. Joseph Bouchette, l’éminent géographe, une autre, M. McTavish, le chef de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, et la troisième, M. Roderic McKenzie ; et un fils, Charles, qui lui succéda dans la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, et mourut, aussi à Terrebonne, en 1812, laissant trois enfants, Charles, Jean et Marguerite, qu’il avait eus dans les pays d’en haut, et qu’il avait fait baptiser ensemble à Terrebonne, l’année précédente.

sants, ni aux Assiniboines, qui étaient alors en guerre avec les tribus du midi et se seraient opposés à son départ. Après une marche pénible de quinze jours, au milieu de plaines incendiées, elle arriva au village des Mandanes, sur les bords du Missouri, que M. Charles McKenzie, dans la relation intéressante qu'il a faite de ce voyage, nomme le " Mississouri. "

L'expédition y fit la rencontre des capitaines Lewis et Clarke, chargés par le gouvernement américain de faire l'exploration des pays nouvellement acquis de l'Espagne dans la direction du Haut Missouri, de traverser les Montagnes Rocheuses et d'atteindre l'Océan Pacifique,—mission qui leur coûta deux ans de travaux, avec toutes les ressources, en hommes et en matériel, que le gouvernement avait mises à leur disposition.

M. Larocque fut très bien, et même amicalement reçu par les officiers américains, qui rendirent aux hommes de sa petite troupe tous les services dont ils avaient nécessairement besoin au milieu de tribus tout à fait étrangères et en guerre entr'elles; faisant réparer leurs armes, raccommoder leurs harnais, et garder leurs chevaux, qui étaient exposés à être enlevés par les rôdeurs de nuit et les Assiniboines. Messieurs Larocque et MacKenzie se plurent à reconnaître ces bons offices.

Le capitaine Clarke surtout, sut se rendre agréable. Le capitaine Lewis l'aurait été presque autant si la haine non déguisée qu'il entretenait contre les Anglais n'avait

quelquefois rendu les rapports difficiles. Dès les premiers jours, le capitaine Lewis prévint M. Larocque qu'il ne lui serait pas permis de donner des pavillons ni des médailles aux Sauvages, comme cela se pratiquait au Nord; que ces objets étaient considérés par les autorités américaines comme des emblèmes sacrés de l'attachement des Sauvages à leur pays, etc.; qu'à part cette restriction et celle relative aux boissons fortes, le commerce était libre à tous.

Il paraîtrait que l'expédition américaine n'était pas bien vue des Sauvages, malgré les beaux discours des officiers et l'offre de présents que quelques-uns seulement acceptèrent.

“ Si ces blancs”, disaient les chefs, “ étaient venus à nous avec des intentions charitables, ils auraient chargé leur grand canot des articles nécessaires aux Sauvages (1)..... Il est vrai qu'ils ont beaucoup d'ammunition, mais ils préfèrent la gaspiller inutilement que d'en réserver une seule charge pour un pauvre Mandane (2).

“ Si j'avais ces guerriers blancs dans mes plaines d'en haut”, disait le chef des Gros Ventres, “ mes jeunes gens à cheval en auraient bon marché comme d'autant de “ Loups ” (3). Il n'y a que deux hommes sensés parmi

(1) L'expédition avait remonté le Missouri jusqu'au village des Mandanes, sur plusieurs grands canots et un grand bateau ponté.

(2) Allusion probable à l'exercice du tir par les soldats qui accompagnaient l'expédition.

(3) Tribu avec laquelle ils étaient en guerre.

eux, celui qui travaille le fer et celui qui raccommode les fusils ”.

Nous avons jusqu'à présent vu les traiteurs en contact avec les tribus pauvres et misérables du Nord qui mendiaient quelques mesures de poudre, quelques brasses de tabac et du rhum ; l'expédition de M Larocque nous transporte au milieu des peuplades plus riches et plus guerrières du Midi, où le Sauvage indompté, ne connaissant guère les rigueurs de l'hiver, vit fier et indépendant, dans l'abondance, au milieu d'innombrables troupeaux de buffles dispersés dans les immenses plaines qui s'étendent jusqu'au pied des Montagnes Rocheuses.

Ces Sauvages connaissaient à peine la petite chasse, et n'avaient pas encore, pour la plupart, trafiqué avec l'homme blanc.

“ Les blancs ne savent pas vivre ”, disaient-ils à M. Larocque ; “ ils laissent leur pays par petites bandes ; ils risquent leurs vies sur le Grand Lac et parmi des nations étrangères qui les prendront pour des ennemis. A quoi leur sert le castor ? est-ce qu'il les préserve de la maladie ? les suit-il après leur mort ” ?

M. McKenzie leur ayant dit que les nations du nord étaient industrielles, amies des blancs, et qu'elles travaillaient le castor pour eux :

“ Nous ne sommes pas des esclaves ”, répondit le chef ; “ nos pères n'étaient point esclaves non plus. Il n'y avait pas d'hommes blancs lorsque j'étais jeune, et nous n'avons jamais fait pitié. . . . L'homme blanc a

apporté quelque chose de bon, mais il a aussi apporté la picote et l'eau de feu ; les Sauvages maintenant diminuent ; ils ne sont plus heureux. ”

Cette première expédition au sud-ouest n'eut pas de résultats satisfaisants, au point de vue de la traite ; cependant, la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, qui s'était réunie à celle de Sir Alexandre MacKenzie pendant l'hiver de 1804-1805, résolut d'y renvoyer M. Larocque, avec instruction de se rendre, s'il était possible, jusqu'au pied des Montagnes, afin d'encourager les Sauvages à travailler le castor, aussi abondant dans leurs rivières que les buffles et les élans l'étaient dans leurs prairies. M. Charles McKenzie fut chargé de l'accompagner de nouveau chez les Mandanes.

A leur arrivée sur les bords du Missouri, ils trouvèrent une peuplade des “ Gros Ventres ” en émoi, chantant et dansant autour de trophées parmi lesquels il était facile de distinguer de nombreux objets ayant appartenu à des blancs, indices certains du massacre de quelques postes de la Compagnie dans le nord.

M. Larocque leur fit part de ses soupçons. Les “ Gros Ventres ”, qui tenaient à la présence de marchands parmi eux, et craignaient de les mécontenter, admirent qu'ils avaient été en guerre, mais il prétendirent que ce n'était qu'accidentellement qu'il leur était arrivé de tuer des blancs. M. Larocque désirait attendre l'arrivée des “ Corbeaux ”, et remonter avec eux vers

les montagnes : il feignit donc d'accepter cette explication, qu'il eût d'ailleurs été imprudent de contester.

Quelques jours après, les " Corbeaux " arrivèrent en effet pour leur visite annuelle, au nombre de plus de deux mille, tous à cheval, hommes, femmes et enfants, les tout petits, attachés à la selle, ceux qui avaient plus de six ans chevauchant à côté de leurs pères et de leurs plus grands frères.

Cette foule de Sauvages parés de leurs plus riches plumes et descendant fièrement, en colonne serrée, le flanc de la colline, présentait un superbe spectacle dont nos voyageurs, plus habitués aux misères du Nord qu'aux splendeurs sauvages des plaines, furent fortement impressionnés.

Après l'échange de riches présents consistant en chevaux, fusils, maïs, etc., et une présentation solennelle de M. Larocque aux chefs des " Corbeaux " par le chef des " Gros Ventres ", M. Larocque fit part à ces derniers de son intention de remonter le Missouri et de suivre les nouveaux arrivés à leur retour au pied des Montagnes Rocheuses.

Cette proposition ne fut agréable ni aux uns ni aux autres. Les " Corbeaux " craignaient que les visages blancs ne leur jetassent quelque sort ou maléfice ; et les " Gros Ventres ", que les Sauvages des montagnes ne profitassent de leurs relations avec les blancs pour obtenir des armes, et bientôt devenir une source de dangers pour eux.

M. Larocque se serait trouvé fort embarrassé si le doyen et le plus respecté des chefs " Gros Ventres ", qui lui avait toujours montré une grande affection, n'était intervenu pour dominer le mauvais vouloir des uns et les craintes puériles des autres. M. Larocque et deux hommes partirent donc seuls, à la fin de juillet 1805, avec deux mille " Corbeaux ", laissant M. McKenzie rempli d'admiration à la vue du courage de son chef.

M. Larocque ne revint que le 19 novembre, après avoir enduré de grandes misères, et obtenu de bien faibles " retours ". La Compagnie se décida, en conséquence, sur la recommandation de M. de Rocheblave, qui avait remplacé M. Chaboillez dans le département de l'Assiniboine, à abandonner définitivement le Missouri, n'y envoyant que deux autres expéditions pour terminer les transactions commencées. Elles furent confiées à Charles McKenzie, qui en a fait une relation intéressante que nous publierons dans cette collection.

VII.

Réunion des deux fractions de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest après la mort de M. McTavish.—Puissante constitution.—Faste des *Nor-Westers*; leur large hospitalité.—Le *Beaver Club*.—Nouvelle impulsion donnée à la Compagnie.—M. Simon Fraser.—Il continue l'œuvre de M. Alexandre MacKenzie dans la Colombie Britannique, et descend, le premier, le fleuve Fraser jusqu'à la mer.—Son expédition.—M. John Jacob Astor.—Astoria.—Les Bourgeois traversent le continent et s'en emparent.

La mort de M. McTavish avait enlevé tout obstacle à la réunion des divers intérêts canadiens qui, depuis neuf ans, se faisaient la guerre dans le Nord-Ouest. Des ouvertures furent immédiatement faites à Sir Alexander MacKenzie et à ses amis, et le 5 novembre 1804, on signait, à Montréal, une convention ou "agreement" qui mit un terme à toutes les difficultés et établit la compagnie du Nord-Ouest sur des bases tellement solides, qu'elle put, pendant plusieurs années, défier toute opposition.

Cette convention, comme toutes les précédentes, se fit sous seing privé, et devant témoins, car les marchands canadiens n'avaient jamais demandé de charte ou acte de constitution en corporation. Tout, cependant, avait été si bien prévu pour que les droits de chacun

fussent sauvegardés, et des pouvoirs si étendus avaient été laissés à la société réunie en corps délibérant à Fort William, devenu le quartier général de la Compagnie, que l'organisation de 1804 put être maintenue intacte jusqu'à la réunion de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest avec celle de la Baie d'Hudson, en 1821 (1).

Les affaires financières de la Compagnie étaient conduites par des agents, tous commerçants de grande influence, résidant, les uns en Angleterre, les autres en Canada. Ils avaient seuls le pouvoir de faire les achats nécessaires à la traite et d'effectuer la vente des pelleteries, et ils étaient tenus, en outre, de trouver les fonds nécessaires pour toutes les transactions de la Compagnie.

Comme il avait été décidé, dans la convention de 1804, que les trois quarts des actions iraient à l'ancienne Compagnie, ses agents se réservaient le droit d'effectuer la vente des pelleteries et de faire les achats de traite

(1) Les signataires de la convention de 1804 furent, pour l'ancienne Compagnie : MM. John Gregory, William McGillivray, Duncan McGillivray, William Hollowell et Roderic MacKenzie, Bourgeois, et en même temps agents sous la raison sociale McTavish, Frobisher et Co., de Montréal ; Angus Shaw, Daniel McKenzie, William Mackay, John McDonald, Donald McTavish, John Macdonell, Archibald Norman McLeod, Alexander Macdougall, Charles Chaboillez, Peter Grant, John Sayers, Alexander Frazer, Aeneas Cameron, John Finlay, Duncan Cameron, James Hughes, Alexander McRay, Hugh McGillis, Alexander Henry, jnr, John McGillivray, James McKenzie, Simon Fraser, John Duncan Campbell, D. Thompson, John Thomas, Bourgeois hivernants ;

Pour la nouvelle Compagnie ou les " X. Y " : Sir Alexander McKenzie, Thomas Forsyth, John Richardson, John Forsyth, John Ogilvie, James Forsyth, John Englis, John Mure, Alexander Ellice, Bourgeois et agents ; Pierre de Rocheblave, Alexander McKenzie, John Macdonald, James Leith, John Willis, John Haldane, Bourgeois hivernants.

La convention ayant eu lieu à Montréal, presque tous les hivernants étaient représentés par les agents des deux Compagnies comme procureurs.

dans les mêmes proportions, laissant aux agents de la nouvelle compagnie l'autre quart de ces opérations. On poussa même si loin le désir de protéger également les intérêts de tous ceux qui avaient été engagés dans les luttes passées qu'il fut stipulé que les fournisseurs des deux Compagnies rivales seraient patronnées dans la même proportion.

Afin d'éviter tout malentendu à l'avenir et de conserver à la Compagnie toute sa force, en même temps qu'un contrôle absolu sur ses membres, les pouvoirs les plus étendus, et même les plus arbitraires, furent donnés à l'assemblée générale des Bourgeois, qui devait se tenir annuellement au mois de juin, au Fort William, où tous pouvaient être présents ou être représentés par leurs chargés de pouvoirs.

Cette assemblée avait le droit de décider, à la majorité absolue des voix, de toutes questions ayant rapport à la Compagnie et à son commerce, telles que l'extension et la distribution des postes, les réclamations des Bourgeois et des employés, etc., etc. Elle avait aussi le droit de priver, en tout ou en partie, de sa part dans les profits, tout Bourgeois convaincu de mauvaise conduite ou de négligence grave de ses devoirs.

Pour éviter la compétition dont on avait, déjà deux fois, eu tant à souffrir, il fut stipulé que nul Bourgeois n'aurait le droit de faire la traite au nord du Missouri ou du Lac Supérieur, ni d'y avoir un intérêt même indirect ; et une pénalité de £5,000 par action fut

imposée pour toute infraction éventuelle à cette stipulation, la plus importante de la convention.

Afin de pouvoir contrôler l'introduction de nouveaux membres, il n'était permis de vendre sa part ou ses actions qu'à un sociétaire ; d'un autre côté, cependant, il était loisible aux membres qui le désiraient de se retirer de la Compagnie à des conditions libérales et calculées sur leur temps de service. Tous les anciens Bourgeois, c'est-à-dire tous ceux qui furent parties à la coalition de 1804, pouvaient se retirer à leur loisir, et devaient recevoir, pendant sept années, la moitié du profit résultant de leurs actions, sans être soumis à aucune responsabilité pour l'administration des affaires ; mais ils demeureraient toujours passibles de la forte pénalité imposée contre ceux qui entreprendraient un trafic en opposition.

Dans le cas de décès, la part du défunt retournait à la Compagnie ; mais, afin de faire bénéficier les héritiers de l'actionnaire décédé de ses travaux et de ses peines, il fut entendu qu'ils pourraient être substitués à ses droits en consentant à accepter ses obligations et surtout les restrictions relatives à la compétition.

Au moyen de cette puissante organisation, la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest put se maintenir sans éprouver les tiraillements qui l'avaient jusqu'alors affaiblie. Les scènes de violence cessèrent à l'intérieur ; la vente des spiritueux fut considérablement diminuée, et le commerce se fit d'une manière plus régulière et plus profi-

table. Les commis et les employés eurent seuls à souffrir de la coalition, car leurs salaires, qui avaient été élevés de vingt-cinq par cent pendant la compétition, furent réduits à leur taux ordinaire plus que modeste; et encore étaient-ils le plus souvent engagés d'avance pour faire face aux extravagances du séjour de Montréal et de Fort William.

De cette époque date la grande puissance de la Compagnie qui, pendant encore dix ans, dit Washington Irving, *held a lordly sway over the wintry lakes and boundless forests of the Canadas almost equal to that of the East India Company over the voluptuous climes and magnificent realms of the Orient.*

Ses Bourgeois tenaient le haut du pavé dans la ville de Montréal. Tout étranger d'un rang élevé était assuré de trouver à leur table hospitalière une réception manquant peut-être de ce recherché et de cette distinction que l'argent ne procure pas toujours, mais cordiale, large et généreuse.

Comme tous les hommes qui ont longtemps souffert et vigoureusement travaillé pour arriver au bien-être, les Bourgeois étaient pressés de jouir de leur fortune, et fiers d'en faire parade, au risque même de voir disparaître en quelques années cette aisance acquise au prix de tant de souffrances.

Les fastueuses réceptions du "Beaver Club" sont restées pendant bien des années dans le souvenir des habitants de la ville de Montréal. Quelle joie, quelle extrava-

gance à ces brillants et bruyants festins où les magnats du Nord-Ouest se réunissaient tous les quinze jours, pendant la saison d'hiver, pour se rappeler les prouesses de leur ancien temps, les périls des torrents, les sauvetages miraculeux opérés par leurs guides, les scènes de misères navrantes dont ils avaient été les témoins et parfois les héros !

Corporation exclusive s'il en fut, personne n'était admis à faire partie du *Beaver Club* sans avoir fait ses preuves dans les "pays d'En Haut" et avoir obtenu les suffrages unanimes de ses membres. Cependant, la table somptueuse du club était toujours ouverte aux étrangers de distinction et aux *Nor-Westers* de passage à Montréal, et les officiers méritants de la Compagnie y obtenaient très souvent leur introduction dans la société quelque peu exclusive de cette ville.

Le *Beaver Club* avait été fondé en 1785, lors de la coalition des marchands canadiens ; il ne se composait, à l'origine, que de dix-neuf membres, ayant tous hiverné dans le Nord-Ouest, et il se maintint toujours florissant jusqu'en 1824. A cette époque, il eut le sort de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, qui s'était amalgamée avec sa puissante rivale, la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, ou plutôt, qui s'y était noyée. Le commerce des territoires avait fui les rives du Saint-Laurent pour se diriger vers celles de la Baie d'Hudson : les puissants d'hier durent consacrer leurs efforts à conserver pour leurs familles quelques bribes de la fortune d'autrefois.

On trouve encore, dispersées autour de Montréal, quelques pièces d'argenterie et de verrerie, restes des beaux jours du *Beaver Club*, et, plus rarement, quelques unes de ces larges médailles d'or que les membres portaient aux grand jours, et dont l'exergue : *Fortitude in distress*, devait leur rappeler de bien vifs et bien précieux souvenirs.

Sir Alexander MacKenzie, après avoir été créé chevalier, brigua et obtint les suffrages de ses compatriotes canadiens. Il fut élu député à l'Assemblée Législative par le comté de Huntingdon ; mais la politique ne lui convenant guère, il la quitta pour retourner en Angleterre, où il épousa une jeune femme de son nom, et ne s'occupa plus que de haut des affaires de la Compagnie. Il ne perdait cependant pas de vue, nous le verrons plus tard, son idée dominante : la formation, avec la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, d'une puissante organisation capable de réaliser son rêve d'une grande voie de communication à travers le continent américain.

Sir Alexander MacKenzie avait, en 1793, ouvert la voie des Montagnes Rocheuses et de la Colombie Anglaise, longtemps appelée *New Caledonia* par ces vigoureux Ecosseis de la Compagnie, désireux de trouver partout sous leurs pas un souvenir de la patrie absente. La Compagnie du Nord-Ouest ne devait pas longtemps laisser ce nouveau champ d'exploitation sans se l'approprier. Pendant que M. Thompson faisait des efforts

désespérés pour franchir les montagnes, au Midi, MM. Simon Fraser, Jules-Maurice Quesnel, Daniel, Harmon, John Stuart et autres, suivant la route déjà en partie tracée, pénétraient dans le pays, et y laissaient leurs noms comme souvenir de leurs travaux.

Monsieur Fraser, le courageux explorateur de la rivière Fraser, est certainement celui qui, avec M. Harmon, autre Bourgeois de la Compagnie, a le plus contribué à ouvrir et à faire connaître cette vaste région aux associés, et à y étendre leurs relations commerciales. Il est en même temps celui dont on a le moins parlé et dont les travaux ont été le moins appréciés par ceux qui devaient les faire connaître et qui en ont bénéficié. Sir Georges Simpson, dans son livre *Overland journey around the World*, s'attribue à lui-même le mérite d'avoir, le premier, descendu la rivière Fraser, en 1828, c'est-à-dire vingt ans après l'exploration dont il va être question plus loin.

M. Simon Fraser naquit de parents écossais et catholiques, à Bennington, sur l'Hudson, en 1773. Lorsqu'éclata l'insurrection américaine, son père se rangea sous les drapeaux du Roi, et fut fait prisonnier à la reddition de l'armée du général Burgoyne, dans laquelle il avait le rang de capitaine.

Jeté dans les prisons d'Albany, il y mourut des mauvais traitements qu'il eut à endurer, et sa veuve se retira au Canada avec ses enfants, d'abord aux Trois-Rivières, puis au Côteau-du-Lac, et enfin à Saint-André, dans le township de Cornwall.

A l'âge de quatorze ans, le jeune Simon fut envoyé à l'école, à Montréal; à seize ans, il était engagé comme aspirant commis dans la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, et à vingt-six ans, il avait atteint le but tant ambitionné de tous : il était Bourgeois.

Après la réunion de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest et de la Compagnie des " X Y ", M. Fraser reçut l'ordre de traverser les Montagnes Rocheuses par le Nord, et d'établir des relations avec les Sauvages de ces régions jusqu'alors inexploitées. Arrivé au pied des montagnes, à un endroit qu'il nomma " Rocky Mountain Portage", il y laissa trois commis, MM. James McDougal, Archibald McGillivray et John Stuart, avec douze hommes; et, accompagné de six autres, il atteignit, à la " hauteur des terres", un petit lac auquel il donna plus tard le nom de l'un des Bourgeois, M. Archibald Norman McLeod. Il y laissa trois hommes en avant-poste, et revint passer l'hiver avec le reste de l'expédition, au Portage du pied de la montagne, dans le haut de la rivière La Paix.

Au printemps de 1806, il expédie au fort Chippewean deux canots chargés de pelleteries, avec un compte-rendu de ses opérations, puis, reprenant immédiatement le chemin des montagnes, il atteint les eaux du Tacoutché Tessé, remonte un de ses tributaires qu'il nomme " Stuart", du nom de M. John Stuart, qui l'accompagne, et à une cinquantaine de milles de son embouchure, construit un poste qu'il nomme *New Caledonia*, nom qui

devait plus tard être donné à tout le pays arrosé par le Haut Fraser. Il y laisse M. Stuart avec deux hommes, traverse des plaines ouvertes vers l'ouest et atteint un lac auquel il donne le nom de "Fraser". Il y passe l'été au milieu de Sauvages qui n'ont jamais vu les blancs, et n'en ont même jamais entendu parler, puis revient à *New Caledonia* passer l'hiver avec M. Stuart.

A la débâcle du printemps de 1807, M. Fraser fait descendre en toute hâte un canot chargé de pelleteries, et demande du renfort.

A l'automne, deux canots remplis de marchandises lui arrivent, sous la conduite de MM. Jules Quesnel et Faries, avec instruction pressante de descendre la "Grande Rivière", le *Tacoutché Tesse*, que tous croyaient être le Columbia, et d'en faire un relevé jusqu'à la mer, afin de prendre les devants sur les Américains, qui avaient, l'année précédente, atteint l'embouchure du Columbia par le Sud (1), et qui s'emparaient rapidement du pays en vertu du droit de découverte et d'occupation antérieure (2).

Le 22 mai 1808, après avoir fait les préparatifs d'un long voyage, M. Fraser, accompagné de MM. John Stuart et Jules-Maurice Quesnel, de dix-neuf Voyageurs

(1) Les capitaines Lewis et Clarke.

(2) Nous devons les renseignements qui précèdent sur M. Fraser à l'obligeance de son neveu, l'honorable R. W. Scott, sénateur. Ils donnent une excellente idée de l'énergie et de l'activité de M. Fraser, ainsi que de l'entrain et de la rapidité avec laquelle la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest mettait à exécution ses projets pour le développement de son commerce et l'agrandissement de l'Empire Britannique en Amérique.

et de deux Sauvages, s'embarque à l'embouchure de la petite rivière qu'il nomme *Fraser River*, probablement celle qui porte aujourd'hui le nom de Nechaco et de Rivière Stuart. Quatre canots portent l'expédition.

La première partie du voyage se fit sans incidents remarquables, et en grande partie au milieu de belles vallées, riches en gibier, et peuplées par une race de Sauvages, qu'il nomma Nasquitins, dont il n'eut qu'à se féliciter. Se rappelant cependant les rapports qui avaient été faits à Sir Alexander MacKenzie, il prit les précautions nécessaires pour se prémunir contre toute surprise ou trahison. Ses hommes se tinrent continuellement armés, et tous les soirs on montait la garde autour du campement comme en pays ennemi.

Aidé d'un fort courant, M. Fraser atteignit bientôt le pays des "Atnaughs", Sauvages qui n'avaient jamais vu d'armes à feu, quoiqu'ils en eussent entendu parler. Afin de leur inspirer une salutaire frayeur et de leur démontrer que ni lui ni ses gens n'avaient à craindre les cruelles tribus qu'on leur disaient habiter le bas de la rivière et les bords de l'Océan, il fit décharger quelques armes à feu dont la détonation les épouvanta. Ils s'empressèrent de lui dire que les Sauvages n'étaient pas méchants, et lui demandèrent de ne point leur faire de mal, mais d'être, toutefois, bien sur leur gardes en approchant de leurs villages, afin de ne pas les surprendre, car, dans leur première frayeur, ils pourraient peut-être décocher leurs flèches sur eux et les blesser.

Le cours de la rivière devenait plus accéléré, et la navigation plus difficile; un canot fut perdu dans un remous, et, au dire des Sauvages, les rapides allaient devenir plus nombreux, plus pénibles à franchir et parfois impassables même pour les gens du pays.

Un des chefs, après une peinture désespérante de la rivière, exposa à M. Fraser que, s'il tenait absolument, malgré leur avis, à continuer sa route, il était préférable d'abandonner les canots et de se diriger à l'est, par terre, vers une rivière (1) débouchant en bas des rapides et qu'il pourrait atteindre par un court voyage de trois ou quatre jours au milieu de belles plaines. *But going to the sea by an indirect route was not the object of my undertaking*, dit simplement M. Fraser; et il continua sa course, transportant canots et bagages par-dessus les montagnes qui bordent la rivière, et sautant les rapides partout où la navigation n'était pas tout à fait impossible.

Durant le cours de cette pénible navigation, ils passèrent la décharge de la rivière *Chilcotin*, venant de l'Ouest, et apprirent des Sauvages qu'elle coulait au milieu d'un superbe pays couvert de gibier. Le 9 juin, ils arrivèrent au plus formidable des obstacles, qu'on leur avait dit être infranchissable, "Le Rapide Couvert", au bas duquel les attendait une nombreuse bande de Sauvages qui leur étaient étrangers.

(1) Le Camchin, que M. Fraser nomme *The Thoyapsoi*.

Comme il importait de créer une bonne et durable impression et ne pas "faire pitié", tous se couvrirent de leurs meilleurs vêtements.

This morning our men put on their best clothes. Our two Indians having only a beaver robe and an orignal skin, I gave them each a blanket and a braillet so that we might appear to more advantage to the eyes of the new Indians we were to meet at the Rapide Couvert. At 7 A. M. our arms and everything being in due order, we embarked and in a few hours we were at our distination.

Here the channel contracts to about forty yards and is enclosed by two precipices of immense height which, bending towards each other made it narrower above than below. The waver which rolls down the extraordinary passage in tumultuous waves and with great velocity, had a frightful appearance. However, it being absolutely impossible to carry canoes by land, all hands, without hesitation, embarked as it were "à corps perdu" upon the mercy of this awful tide. Once engaged, the die was cast ! !

Our great difficulty was keeping the canoes within the fil d'eau, that is clear of the precipices on one side and from the gulfs formed by the waves on the other. Thus skimming along as fast as lightning, the crews calm and determined followed each other in awful silence, and when we arrived at the end, we stood gazing at each other in silent congratulation at our narrow escape from total destruction.

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La petite troupe, malgré les remontrances des Sauvages, fit encore vingt-cinq milles d'une navigation aussi dangereuse. M. Fraser, désormais parfaitement convaincu que la rivière était impassable, se décida enfin à mettre ses canots en sûreté pour le retour et à continuer sa course par terre. L'on mit en cache tout ce qu'il n'était pas possible d'emporter; puis, chacun s'étant chargé de quatre-vingts livres pesant, c'est-à-dire des articles les plus nécessaires, on se mit en route.

Après deux jours d'une marche moins pénible qu'on ne s'y attendait, l'expédition arriva au pays des Askettihs, près de l'endroit appelé aujourd'hui Lilloet. Elle y fut très bien reçue des naturels. Un vieux chef, qui n'avait, paraît-il, que le défaut d'être très loquace, dit à M. Fraser qu'il avait été à la mer, qui n'était plus guère qu'à dix nuits, et qu'il y avait vu des blancs et des grands canots; que le chef des blancs était un homme très fier, et se donnait de grands airs en marchant sur le pont de son grand canot. Un autre lui dessina une carte du pays, et lui dit qu'il existait à l'intérieur une autre grande rivière qui courait comme celle que l'expédition avait suivie, et se jetait aussi dans la mer (1).

Le fleuve étant devenu presque navigable, M. Fraser échangea une lime et une bouillotte pour un canot dans lequel il mit les articles les plus lourds, et qu'il confia à M. Stuart, à un Voyageur et à deux des Sauvages.

(1) Evidemment le Columbia, que M. Fraser croyait descendre.

Ces derniers ayant trouvé le canot trop chargé, mirent sans cérémonie le Voyageur à terre, et continuèrent leur route, au désespoir de M. Fraser à qui ne souriait pas l'idée de laisser son lieutenant ainsi seul à la merci de ces Sauvages inconnus. M. Fraser suivit les bords de la rivière avec toute la vitesse possible, et, dix milles plus bas, retrouva M. Stuart calme et le moins inquiet de tous.

Après avoir réussi à acheter un autre canot, l'expédition fut divisée en deux bandes, la principale faisant route par les montagnes, l'autre descendant d'innombrables rapides ; et toutes deux se réunirent, le 19 juin, à l'embouchure de la grande rivière à laquelle M. Fraser donna le nom de " Thompson ", en souvenir de son ami M. David Thompson, qui devait, disait-il, être, en ce moment, quelque part vers les sources de cette même rivière, cherchant à se frayer un passage à travers les montagnes.

Dix-huit cents Sauvages de la tribu des Hacamaugh y attendaient les explorateurs. Ils leur firent une très favorable réception, et leur envoyèrent d'abondantes provisions de saumon, d'huile et de racines, et six chiens pour les Voyageurs.

Au dire des Sauvages du haut de la rivière, qui conseillaient de prendre par terre, l'expédition devait trouver ici un terme à ses tribulations, et naviguer sur des eaux calmes jusqu'à la mer. La première journée prouva le peu de foi que l'on pouvait reposer dans les rapports des Sauvages. Elle fut employée à porter

les canots par un étroit et dangereux sentier, couvert de cailloux roulants, et serpentant sur le déclin d'une montagne au pied de laquelle on voyait, de toute part, les tombes de malheureux Sauvages à qui le pied avait manqué, et qui avaient roulé dans l'abîme. Cette montagne porte aujourd'hui le nom *Jackass Mountain*, les chercheurs d'or d'il y a quelques années y ayant perdu de nombreux mulets entraînés avec leurs charges dans le gouffre.

Cette journée avait tellement découragé les hommes que, le lendemain, sans en parler à leurs chefs, ils se décidèrent à sauter les rapides dans trois canots, préférant tout risquer plutôt que de se soumettre aux fatigues de la veille. Deux réussirent à entrer dans un des nombreux remous de la rivière, mais le troisième fut entraîné comme un éclair par le torrent et mis en pièces, les hommes ne se sauvant que par une chance toute providentielle, relatée en termes émus par M. Fraser.

I have been a long period in the Rocky Mountains, ajoute-t-il, but have never seen anything like this country. It is so wild that I cannot find words to describe our situation at times. We had to pass where no human being should venture ; yet in those places there is a regular foot path impressed upon the very rocks, by frequent travelling

Besides this, steps which are formed like a ladder or the shrouds of a ship by poles hanging to one another, crossed at certain distances with twigs, the whole suspended from the top to the foot of immense precipices and fastened at

both extremities to stones and trees, furnished a safe and convenient passage to the natives ; but we, who had not had the advantage of their education and experience, were often in imminent danger when obliged to follow their example.

Les nombreuses descriptions faites depuis quelques années des canyons du Fraser et des sentiers qui les bordent, ne peuvent donner qu'une faible idée des difficultés que nos hardis voyageurs eurent à surmonter, et du courage presque surhumain qu'il leur fallut pour continuer leur voyage. La découverte de riches mines d'or y a attiré depuis de nombreux mineurs ; un trafic considérable a nécessité de forts travaux sur le flanc de ces montagnes jusqu'alors inaccessibles aux blancs ; les sentiers ont été élargis et une route à mulet y a même été pratiquée en bien des endroits.

M. Fraser n'eut qu'à se féliciter des Sauvages qui habitaient cette région si ingrate. Quoique pauvres, ils pourvurent l'expédition, autant qu'il leur fut possible, de saumon séché, la principale nourriture des indigènes de la Colombie. Sans leur aide et leur bon vouloir, l'entreprise n'aurait pu être poussée aussi loin.

A Spassum, M. Fraser fut conduit à un cimetière situé de l'autre côté de la rivière, et admira le soin que l'on en prenait, et le respect dont les morts étaient entourés. De grandes sculptures en bois, représentant différents animaux, indiquaient chez ces Sauvages un goût et un degré de civilisation bien supérieurs à ce qu'il avait vu ailleurs.

A un certain endroit, près du lieu maintenant appelé " Yale ", l'expédition put reprendre les canots, et sortir enfin des rapides, des torrents et des canyons pour déboucher sur une vaste nappe d'eau, entourée de forêts merveilleuses, où croissaient des cèdres gigantesques mesurant jusqu'à cinq brasses de circonférence, et dominée par le mont " Stremotch ", aujourd'hui *Mount Baker*, élevant sa tête couverte de neige comme un grand phare au milieu de la plaine.

Les Sauvages parurent plus avancés que ceux du Nord, et ne semblèrent pas surpris de voir des blancs, ni craindre leurs armes à feu. Ils se conduisirent d'une façon amicale, et invitèrent M. Fraser et quelques-uns de ses hommes à visiter la grande maison, ou plutôt l'immense hangar, long de six cents pieds, où ils habitaient tous ensemble au nombre de plus de deux cents.

Malgré la réception empressée qui lui avait été faite, M. Fraser s'aperçut bientôt qu'il ne pouvait compter sur le bon vouloir des tribus du littoral comme il comptait sur celui des tribus des montagnes. On lui refusa des canots pour continuer le voyage, et les Sauvages des hauteurs étant retournés avec les leurs, l'expédition ne pouvait ni avancer, ni reculer, et se trouvait dans une situation très critique.

Il n'y avait pas à hésiter un instant : M. Fraser s'empare de force du grand canot de gala du chef, s'y embarque avec tout son monde, et, dans l'après-midi

du 2 juillet, il débouche enfin sur un bras de mer, à un endroit que les Sauvages nommèrent Pos-hil-roc.

Au lieu d'un cri de joie en atteignant les eaux de l'Océan Pacifique, M. Fraser ne laisse entendre qu'une plainte de désappointement. *The latitude is 49° nearly, while that of the entrance of the Columbia is 46° 20'. This river is therefore not the Columbia ! Had I been convinced of this when I left the canoes, I would certainly have returned.*

Ce fleuve n'était pas le Columbia, mais il fut bientôt le *Fraser* ! ! ! Le hardi explorateur aurait donc eu tort d'abandonner une entreprise qui devait si justement transmettre son nom à la postérité, aider à la connaissance de la géographie de pays lointains, pousser la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest à de nouvelles recherches, et contribuer si largement à conserver ces contrées à la Couronne d'Angleterre, qu'il avait appris, bien jeune encore, à tant chérir.

M. Fraser aurait voulu pousser ses explorations au-delà, mais le manque de provisions le força de retourner sur ses pas pour s'en procurer.

A son arrivée au village où il avait saisi le canot, il en trouva les habitants si surexcités qu'il commença à craindre les plus grands désastres. Pour comble d'embaras les Sauvages de la côte l'avaient suivi, et avaient communiqué leurs sentiments d'hostilité à ceux qui jusqu'alors lui avaient été favorables, et tous ensemble paraissaient décidés à empêcher le retour de l'expédition.

Toujours poursuivis et harassés par ces hordes de Sauvages peints pour la guerre, les Voyageurs refusèrent enfin de reprendre les canots, disant qu'ils étaient résolus de se jeter dans les montagnes, et d'essayer d'atteindre par terre l'endroit où ils avaient campé le 24 juin, à quelques milles au dessus de la rivière nommée aujourd'hui Anderson. Ils préféreraient, disaient-ils, courir le risque d'être tués en route, plutôt que de souffrir le continuel et plus terrible tourment d'avoir à chaque instant la mort devant les yeux, et de se garder à toute heure contre les surprises et les attaques d'ennemis toujours à leur poursuite.

MM Fraser, Stuart et Quesnel ne purent que difficilement leur faire comprendre la folie de leur décision, et les convaincre qu'il n'y avait de salut pour tous qu'en restant ensemble et en montrant un front solide à l'ennemi. Après bien des exhortations, ils finirent par leur faire jurer devant Dieu qu'ils consentiraient tous à mourir plutôt que d'abandonner l'expédition.

Par un de ces revirements toujours si prompts chez ces natures mobiles, les Voyageurs passèrent, subitement, du suprême découragement au sentiment d'une confiance illimitée en leurs propres forces et en l'habileté de leurs chefs.

Après s'être endimanchés, chacun prit son paquet, visita ses armes, et tous, chantant et faisant un tapage à tête fendre, s'embarquèrent, dirigeant vigoureusement leur grand canot sur l'ennemi, qui voulait leur barrer le passage.

Cette détermination en imposa aux Sauvages ; les plus craintifs commencèrent à descendre la rivière ; les plus braves se tinrent à une distance convenable, se laissant insensiblement dépasser ; quelques heures après ils avaient tous disparu !

Le voyage de retour fut pénible, mais se fit sans incident remarquable. Passant devant une rivière considérable venant de l'Est, M. Fraser lui donna le nom de "Quesnel", en l'honneur de son vigoureux lieutenant, et le 6 août l'expédition arriva enfin au fort de l'entrée de la rivière Stuart, aujourd'hui le fort Georges, où l'on trouva M. Faries et ses deux hommes, sains et saufs.

M. Fraser demeura encore plusieurs années dans le Nord-Ouest. En 1811, il est à la tête du département de la Rivière Rouge au fort Liard ; en 1813, on le trouve aux Fourches de la Rivière MacKenzie ; et on le voit à Fort William lors de la prise de ce poste par Lord Selkirk et ses soldats meurons.

De retour des Pays d'en Haut, il épousa une fille du capitaine Allen McDonnell, de Mathilda, Haut-Canada, la tante de l'honorable R. W. Scott, sénateur, et mourut à Saint-André, dans le township de Cornwall, le 19 avril 1862, à l'âge de 86 ans.

Pendant que la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest s'établissait maîtresse du commerce des pelleteries au Nord et à l'Ouest des grands lacs, d'autres marchands, Canadiens et Anglais, les associés de la Compagnie de Makinaw,

s'emparaient de la traite sur les bords du Wisconsin, du Mississippi et de ses tributaires. Leur entrepôt principal était à Michilimakinac, poste établi sur une île, à la réunion des lacs Michigan et Huron.

Les Américains, déjà jaloux de la prépondérance anglaise, et craignant de voir des étrangers prendre un ascendant trop considérable sur les tribus sauvages, avaient, depuis quelques années, encouragé et subventionné l'établissement de postes de traite sur leurs frontières, pour faire compétition aux marchands canadiens.

Cet expédient n'avait cependant produit que de bien faibles résultats : un commerce officiel ne pouvant guère lutter contre celui d'une association privée ; et, lors de la cession de la Louisiane aux Etats-Unis, en 1803, les sujets anglais avaient déjà la haute main sur la traite de tous les territoires nouvellement acquis.

M. Jacob Astor, riche négociant de New-York, et l'un des rares traiteurs américains dont on ait gardé le souvenir, résolut d'attirer aux Etats-Unis un commerce qui prenait exclusivement la voie du Canada. Peu au fait des détails d'un trafic aussi étendu et qui exigeait des aptitudes et des connaissances qu'il n'avait pu acquérir dans son commerce nécessairement plus restreint, il dut faire appel à quelques employés mécontents de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, et réussit à s'assurer les services de plusieurs d'entre eux, et notamment de M. Alexander McKay, qui avait accompagné Sir Alexandre MacKenzie dans son voyage au delà des Montagnes

Rocheuses, et de M. Donald McKenzie, le frère de M. Roderick McKenzie.

Certain de l'appui moral du gouvernement américain, M. Astor forma *The American Fur Company*, dont il était à peu près le seul actionnaire (les autres ne prêtant que leurs noms et leur expérience), et entra immédiatement en compétition avec ses rivaux.

Une courte lutte convainquit cependant M. Astor que cette compétition allait avoir des résultats désastreux pour tous. Il fit des propositions à la Compagnie de Makinaw, désintéressa une partie de ses membres et prit les autres comme actionnaires d'une nouvelle organisation qu'il nomma : *The South West Company*.

M. Astor n'ayant plus à craindre d'opposition sérieuse que de la part de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, lui fit faire des ouvertures pour une réunion de leurs intérêts au delà des Montagnes Rocheuses, mais ces offres furent refusées, et M. Astor se prépara à agir indépendamment de sa grande rivale.

Après avoir soigneusement établi les bases de son organisation nouvelle, il se décida à mettre immédiatement à exécution le projet qu'il avait formé depuis quelque temps d'asseoir solidement les intérêts américains sur les côtes du Pacifique, et de créer, à l'embouchure du fleuve Columbia, un établissement important qui servirait d'entrepôt général au trafic qu'il se proposait de créer de ce côté.

Dans ce but, il organisa deux expéditions, dont l'une, sous la direction de M. Price Hunt, négociant influent d'Albany et le bras droit de M. Astor, devait prendre la route de terre par le Missouri, traverser les Montagnes Rocheuses, et nouer, en route, des relations avec les Sauvages des montagnes et du littoral, tandis que l'autre, sous les ordres de M. Mackay, devait s'embarquer sur le *Tonquin*, faire le tour du Cap Horn, et transporter à la nouvelle colonie le matériel et les provisions nécessaires pour un établissement considérable.

Le *Tonquin* mit six mois à faire le trajet ; six mois d'ennuis, de querelles et de luttes entre son commandant, le lieutenant Thom, les associés et leurs employés. Il arriva enfin, le 22 mars 1811, à l'embouchure du fleuve Columbia (1).

L'expédition par terre, sous les ordres de MM. Hunt et Donald McKenzie, après s'être recrutée et approvisionnée à Montréal, prit la route des lacs, compléta son équipement à Michilimakinac, descendit le Mississipi jusqu'à Saint-Louis, remonta le Missouri, et, après des souffrances incroyables, atteignit sa destination le 18 janvier 1812, c'est-à-dire dix-huit mois après son départ de Saint-Louis.

La Compagnie du Nord-Ouest fidèle à sa détermination d'étendre son trafic au-delà des Montagnes Rocheu-

(1) Voir : *Adventures on the Columbia*, par M. Ross Cox ; *Astoria*, par Washington Irving, et le Journal de M. Franchère pour la relation de ces tristes expéditions qui devaient se terminer par la destruction de l'équipage du *Tonquin* par les Sauvages, la mort de M. McKay et la ruine des espérances de M. Astor.

ses, résolut de devancer M. Astor et chargea M. David Thompson, qui déjà depuis trois ans explorait le sud des montagnes afin de trouver un passage facile, d'aller établir un poste à l'endroit même que M. Astor se proposait d'atteindre.

Avec son énergie ordinaire, M. Thompson se mit immédiatement en route, et, descendant, le premier, la branche septentrionale du Columbia, il avait, malgré la désertion d'une partie de ses hommes, atteint, à l'hiver de 1810, l'embouchure de la Rivière Spokane, et pris possession du pays au nom du Roi en plantant le drapeau anglais à l'embouchure de tous les cours d'eau importants. Le 15 juillet 1811, il arrivait à l'embouchure du fleuve Columbia pour y trouver les Américains déjà en possession du pays.

Désappointé dans son attente, M. Thompson reprend presque aussitôt le chemin des montagnes, établit un poste chez les "Têtes Plates", à cent lieues au Nord-Est de Spokane, un autre à deux cents milles plus au Nord, qu'il confie à M. Montour (1) et revient au Canada, sans avoir, il est vrai, atteint le but principal de son voyage, mais nous ayant, par son expédition, et en vertu du droit d'exploration et de prise de possession antérieures, acquis tout le pays arrosé par la

(1) Probablement le fils de M. Nicolas Montour, qui devint propriétaire de deux actions de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, à la coalition de 1787, et se retira de la Compagnie vers 1792 pour s'établir à la Pointe-du-Lac, près des Trois-Rivières.

branche septentrionale du Columbia jusqu'au quarante-neuvième degré de latitude (1).

Les commencement d'Astoria furent difficiles. Les chefs avaient peu de confiance en leurs associés, qui, pour la plupart, avaient peu d'intérêt à la réussite de l'entreprise, n'y ayant engagé que de faibles capitaux et s'étant même réservé le droit de se retirer à courte échéance. Il est, par conséquent, peu probable que M. Astor eût pu résister longtemps, même si la guerre de 1812 n'était venue détruire ses espérances et disperser la colonie naissante.

Presque tous les Bourgeois et employés de la Compagnie du *South West* étaient sujets anglais. La nouvelle de la déclaration de guerre qui leur arriva au printemps de 1813, les jeta dans un grand embarras, et ils avaient déjà formé le projet de laisser la Compagnie, lorsque, à

(1) M. Thompson avait pris dans les Montagnes-Rocheuses une femme de la tribu des Cris—une jeune fille de quinze ans—dont il eut plusieurs enfants. Un, au moins, de ces enfants fut placé à l'école de Terrebonne, avec plusieurs autres petits "Bois-Brûlés" que les Nor-Westers y envoyaient faire leur éducation sous la surveillance et le patronage de M. Roderic McKenzie.

M. Thompson passa lui-même une partie des années 1812 et 1813 auprès de son ami, et y prépara la grande carte des territoires du Nord-Ouest qui orna pendant longtemps la salle des festins de Fort William et qui est devenue depuis la propriété de la province d'Ontario. Il quitta définitivement les "pays d'en haut" en 1814, avec sa femme et ses enfants. De retour au Canada, il fut employé par le gouvernement impérial en qualité d'astronome et d'arpenteur à la délimitation de la frontière entre les Etats-Unis et le Canada, à l'ouest des lacs. En 1837, il fut chargé de l'exploration d'une voie de communication par eau entre le lac Huron et la rivière Ottawa, et, quelques années plus tard, il surveilla les sondages du lac St-Pierre.

Une carrière aussi bien remplie aurait dû lui assurer au moins le bien-être ; il n'en fut rien cependant. Cet homme distingué, et dont les travaux avaient été si utiles à l'Etat, passa les dernières années de sa vie dans la plus grande pauvreté. Il mourut à Longueuil, en 1857, âgé de 87 ans et oublié de tous !

l'automne, une " brigade " de canots de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest arriva, drapeaux au vent, en face d'Astoria, avec la nouvelle qu'un navire de guerre anglais allait sous peu s'emparer du poste et le détruire.

M. McTavish offrit, au nom de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, d'acheter immédiatement tous les postes des *South-Westerns* avec leur équipement. Ceux-ci, sous l'influence de la peur, se soumirent, et, quelques jours après, le navire anglais, dont les officiers et les marins s'attendaient à un riche butin, jetait l'ancre à l'entrée du Columbia, pour y apprendre qu'Astoria avait changé de maître, et qu'au lieu du drapeau américain, le drapeau anglais flottait sur "*Fort George*". Astoria avait cessé d'exister !

De graves reproches furent faits aux associés canadiens de M. Astor. Si leur conduite, dans son ensemble, ne parut pas être empreinte de loyauté, aucun blâme ne put être adressé à la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, qui, ayant décidé de faire la lutte, la fit avec une vigueur et une habileté qui lui assura le succès.

La fortune de M. Astor ne fut que partiellement atteinte par ce désastre qui blessait beaucoup plus son amour-propre et son orgueil national. Il passa ses dernières années dans une retraite qu'il sut rendre agréable en réunissant autour de lui un cercle choisi d'amis. Il créa et aida de nombreuses œuvres publiques, dont la principale est la bibliothèque de New-York qui porte son nom.

VIII

Lord Selkirk.—Sa réception à Montréal par les "Bourgeois".
—La colonie d'Assiniboia.—Guerre ouverte entre lord Selkirk et la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest.—Ses causes.—Forte expédition envoyée dans le département du Nord contre la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest.—Résultat désastreux pour lord Selkirk.

Par la prise de possession d'Astoria, les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest étaient devenus les maîtres presque absolus de la traite, des côtes du Labrador à celles de l'Océan Pacifique ; de l'Océan Glacial aux extrêmes limites sud des possessions anglaises.

Leur grande rivale, à moitié ruinée par la lutte qu'elle avait subie, avait été presque complètement refoulée sur les bords de la baie d'Hudson et tout faisait espérer, pour les traiteurs canadiens, une période de prospérité qui les indemniserait des grands sacrifices qu'ils s'étaient imposés, lorsqu'éclata, d'un quartier auquel personne ne songeait, l'orage inattendu qui devait faire disparaître leur puissante Compagnie.

Depuis déjà quelques années, le descendant d'une des plus grandes familles d'Ecosse, Thomas Douglas, comte de Selkirk, homme à idées larges et philanthropiques, en même temps que littérateur distingué, se préoccupait

de ses compatriotes des *Highlands*, qui, au milieu de leurs montagnes, menaient une vie de privations et de misère, sans espoir de jours meilleurs. Il s'intéressait à leur faire trouver une existence moins pénible dans les colonies anglaises de l'Amérique, et il avait déjà réussi, malgré de grandes difficultés, et au prix de sacrifices personnels considérables, à en diriger plusieurs centaines vers l'île du Prince-Edouard.

Après de pénibles commencements, la colonie prit de l'essor ; les colons devinrent bientôt prospères, et leurs descendants occupent encore aujourd'hui les terres sur lesquelles leurs pères, en 1803, étaient venus se fixer, demandant au sol d'Amérique un adoucissement à leurs misères.

Encouragé par ce premier succès, Lord Selkirk visita les Etats-Unis et le Canada. Le pays lui plut ; il s'y acheta de grandes propriétés, et, l'intérêt personnel prenant graduellement le dessus sur ses idées philanthropiques, il finit par voir dans le Nouveau-Monde un vaste champ d'exploitation, et le moyen de se créer une grande fortune tout en continuant son œuvre.

Lord Selkirk fut reçu à bras ouverts à Montréal. Sa réputation l'avait devancé, et tous tenaient à honneur de lui être agréable. Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, qui occupaient le haut du pavé dans la société anglaise, et parmi lesquels l'élément écossais dominait, furent des premiers à lui offrir cette large hospitalité pour laquelle ils étaient renommés.

Le grand seigneur écossais ne manqua pas de reconnaître les procédés de ces "marchands enrichis", en paraissant s'intéresser à tout ce qui les intéressait, et de se prêter à leurs idées mercantiles, en se renseignant sur tous les rouages de leur puissante organisation, sur tous les détails de leurs opérations de traite à l'intérieur, sur les aptitudes, le caractère et les émoluments de leurs employés et de leurs "voyageurs".

Quelques Bourgeois, plus soupçonneux que les autres, s'étonnaient de la persistance avec laquelle Lord Selkirk poussait ses recherches et ses investigations. Ils trouvaient qu'elle dépassait les bornes d'une courtoisie empressée, et qu'elle aurait pu paraître exagérée même chez une personne livrée à une étude spéciale ; cependant ils étaient loin de supposer qu'un descendant de la grande et fière famille des Douglas put avoir un but intéressé, et profitât jamais de renseignements obtenus dans leur intimité pour comploter la ruine de leur Compagnie et son expulsion du Nord-Ouest.

Lord Selkirk retourna en Angleterre, bien décidé, cependant, à mettre à profit les renseignements qu'il avait obtenus. Il jeta les yeux sur la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, à moitié ruinée, il est vrai, par sa lutte contre celle du Nord-Ouest, mais possédant dans sa chartre un instrument qui pouvait devenir formidable entre ses mains. Il fit exhumer cette chartre poudreuse, en confia l'interprétation à des avocats de renom, obtint d'eux une opinion qu'il crut suffisante pour le succès de

ses projets, et entra en négociations avec Sir Alexander MacKenzie pour l'acquisition d'une prépondérance d'intérêts dans cette Compagnie, chose alors assez facile, car ses actions avaient baissé des trois quarts.

N'ayant pu s'entendre longtemps avec son associé, Lord Selkirk achète seul pour £40,000 d'actions, fait réunir les actionnaires, se fait donner ou plutôt se donne à lui-même, au milieu du continent américain, un pays grand comme l'Angleterre !

On a été surpris, dans le temps, de voir le nom de Sir Alexander MacKenzie mêlé à une transaction semblable. Il est certain cependant que cet homme distingué, ami de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, dans laquelle il avait encore de forts intérêts, y avait entrevu la réalisation du projet qu'il avait rêvé plusieurs années auparavant, et dont il parle dans la relation de ses voyages : celui de créer, au moyen des deux compagnies combinées, une association assez forte pour assurer l'établissement d'une grande route commerciale à travers le continent.

N'ayant pas assez de fortune pour acquérir seul un nombre d'actions suffisant pour contrôler la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, il était entré en pourparlers avec Lord Selkirk dans l'espoir d'amener cette Compagnie à termes avec ses anciens associés. Une partie considérable de l'argent devait, espérait-il, être fournie par la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, pour le compte de qui il désirait faire la transaction.

Cette interprétation de la conduite de Sir Alexander MacKenzie est appuyée par une de ses lettres à M. Roderic McKenzie, datée de Londres, le 13 avril 1812, et dont ce dernier fait mention comme suit dans les notes qu'il a laissées de ses relations et correspondances avec Sir Alexander MacKenzie.

Il y est dit : “ J'en ai enfin fini avec ce Lord !! Il a été proposé à mon procureur (*solicitor*) par celui de Sa Seigneurie, que le tiers des actions qui ont été achetées à notre compte commun avant mon départ pour l'Amérique (1), et se montant à £4,700, ainsi que la balance de mon argent qui est encore entre les mains de Sa Seigneurie, me fut remis. J'acceptai cette offre ; j'aurais cependant pu forcer Sa Seigneurie à me passer un tiers de toutes les actions achetées par lui, ainsi que je me proposais d'abord de le faire, y ayant été encouragé par la maison de *Suffolk Lane*, avec l'assentiment de celle de *Mark Lane* (2), mais ces maisons jugèrent à propos de ne pas faire de plus fortes acquisitions.

“ Sir Alexander ajoute que, par un arrangement verbal avec M. McGillivray, les actions acquises appartenaient à la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, et que si M. McGillivray avait été là lui-même, la Compagnie aurait pu acheter pour trente mille louis d'actions qui ont été achetées par Lord Selkirk, qui, s'il persiste dans ses desseins, trouvera qu'il a fait le plus mauvais marché qu'il ait

(1) Sir A. MacKenzie était revenu au Canada en 1810, pour quelques mois.

(2) Maisons de commerce des agents de la Compagnie, à Londres.

encore fait. “ Il va mettre la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest à de plus grands frais que vous ne semblez le croire, et si la Compagnie avait voulu sacrifier £20,000, ce qui lui aurait donné une prépondérance dans la Compagnie de la Baie d’Hudson, cet argent aurait été bien placé ”.

Lord Selkirk ayant atteint son but, se mit immédiatement à l’œuvre pour créer une colonie sur les bords de Rivière Rouge.

Pendant le cours de l’hiver, il ramassa une centaine de malheureux *Highlanders* et Irlandais qu’il expédia, durant l’été de 1811, à la Baie d’Hudson. Arrivés trop tard pour pouvoir être conduits à leur destination, ils passèrent un triste hiver, souffrant du froid et de la faim, et ne se rendirent sur les bords de la Rivière Rouge que l’été suivant, trop tard pour ensemençer leurs terres.

Ces colons furent d’abord assez bien reçus par les Bourgeois et les employés de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, qui voyaient dans ces malheureux, venus d’Ecosse, des compatriotes dont la société leur ferait passer d’une manière moins désagréable les tristes jours de leur solitude. Ils s’empressèrent même de leur venir en aide pendant l’hiver de 1812-1813, en leur fournissant les provisions et les vêtements dont ils avaient un grand besoin.

Tout faisait donc espérer qu’une entente serait possible entre les nouveaux arrivés et la Compagnie du Nord-

Ouest, lorsque M. Miles MacDonnell, le gouverneur de la colonie nouvelle et en même temps l'agent de Lord Selkirk, sous le futile prétexte qu'il craignait que ses colons, alors au nombre de moins de deux cents, ne manquassent de vivres, dans ce pays où l'on abat-tait les buffles par milliers, émit, le 8 janvier 1814, une proclamation défendant, sous peine de confiscation, à toute personne faisant le commerce de pelleteries ou de vivres, de faire sortir du territoire, sans son autorisation, aucune provision de viande, fraîche ou sèche.

Si le gouverneur n'avait eu en vue que d'assurer des vivres à ses colons, il aurait pris des arrangements à l'amiable avec les Bourgeois, qui, plutôt que d'entreprendre une lutte avec des hommes qu'ils avaient soutenus l'hiver précédent, auraient probablement consenti à leur céder à un prix raisonnable le surplus des provisions qu'ils pouvaient avoir accumulé au fort La Souris ou ailleurs. Si, d'un autre côté, ces provisions n'avaient été que suffisantes pour les besoins des postes du Nord, il n'était guère juste d'en priver la Compagnie et d'exposer ses employés, éloignés de tout secours, à manquer de vivres.

M. MacDonell était parfaitement au fait des besoins de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest. Il savait que, si la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson s'approvisionnait de la Baie, sa rivale, au contraire, comptait exclusivement sur le buffle des prairies de l'Ouest et du Sud pour alimenter ses nombreuses brigades de Voyageurs des

départements du Nord, de l'Athabaska et de la Rivière MacKenzie.

Il savait que, s'il était rigoureusement mis à exécution, son ordre amènerait la ruine de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest ; aussi s'empressa-t-il de provoquer des recherches et des saisies dont les colons eurent eux-mêmes bientôt à souffrir.

Bon nombre de ces derniers, prévoyant des résistances, et redoutant les conséquences fâcheuses qui allaient en résulter, demandèrent à quitter le pays, et les Bourgeois, ne se croyant plus tenus à des ménagements, ne manquèrent pas de les encourager dans leur détermination.

Il paraît évident, par tout ce qui a précédé l'acquisition d'Assiniboia ainsi que par les actes de Lord Sil Kirk, et, plus tard, ceux de ses employés, que l'astucieux seigneur écossais avait, dès l'origine, pris la détermination de chasser la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest de la Rivière Rouge. Était-il mû par un sentiment d'hostilité envers cette Compagnie, à cause des rapports récents qu'il avait eus avec sa rivale de la Baie d'Hudson, ou voyait-il dans ces vigoureux trappeurs canadiens un obstacle à ses plans de colonisation ? Dans tous les cas, tout, dans sa conduite, indique un plan préconçu et bien suivi de faire disparaître les *Nor-Westers*.

L'opinion qu'il recherche et obtient de ses avocats, avant même d'acquérir les actions de la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson et avant qu'il eût eu aucun démêlé avec celle du Nord-Ouest, indique clairement qu'il avait

froidement et depuis longtemps formé le projet qui devait lui être si funeste à lui-même.

“ Nous sommes d’avis ”, disent ces avocats, “ qu’une personne qui a obtenu de la Compagnie de la Baie d’Hudson un bail ou une concession en franc alleu, est revêtu de tous les droits inhérents à la propriété foncière en Angleterre et a le droit d’empêcher toutes autres personnes d’occuper une partie des terres, d’en enlever le bois et de pêcher dans les eaux adjacentes (étant telles que le droit privé de pêcher peut y exister) et peut (soit paisiblement ou autrement par moyen légal) les déposséder de toutes les bâtisses qu’elles ont construites récemment en dedans des limites de ses propriétés”.

Lord Selkirk, dans une lettre à un de ses employés supérieurs, indique comment il entend exercer ces prétendus droits.

“ Vous devez les prévenir (les Canadiens) d’une manière positive et solennelle, que la terre appartient à la Compagnie de la Baie d’Hudson, et qu’ils doivent l’abandonner sur le champ. Après leur avoir donné cet avertissement, il ne faut pas leur permettre de couper de bois, soit pour des constructions, soit pour leur chauffage. Que ce qu’ils en ont coupé soit saisi ouvertement et de force et que leurs établissements soient détruits de fond en comble. Prévenez-les pareillement qu’il leur est défendu de pêcher ; et s’ils tendent des filets, saisissez-les comme vous saisissez, en Angleterre, ceux d’un braconnier”.

A l'automne de 1814, M. Miles MacDonald mit le comble au mécontentement en adressant au Bourgeois en charge du poste de la Rivière Rouge la lettre suivante, qui enlevait du coup toutes les illusions que l'on aurait pu se former sur les intentions de Lord Selkirk :

“ District d'Assiniboia,

“ A M. Duncan Cameron,

Agent de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest

aux Fourches de la Rivière-Rouge.

“ Sachez qu'en vertu de l'autorité et au nom de votre Seigneur (*Landlord*) le très honorable Thomas, comte de Selkirk, je vous avise, vous et tous vos associés de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, de quitter le poste et les dépendances que vous occupez maintenant aux Fourches de la Rivière-Rouge, et ce dans six mois à dater de ce jour.

“ Donné sous mon seing, à l'Etablissement de la Rivière-Rouge, ce vingt-et-unième jour d'octobre 1814.

“ MILES MACDONNELL ”.

Une sommation semblable, adressée à des sujets anglais en possession paisible de leurs postes et habitations depuis près de quarante ans, ne pouvait manquer de soulever un cri d'indignation et de mettre fin à tout espoir de conciliation et de bonne entente.

Les Bourgeois n'avaient jamais admis la validité de la charte de la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson ; nous

avons même vu que, afin de donner à cette dernière une occasion de faire valoir ses droits, les Bourgeois avaient, dès 1803, frété une expédition de traite à la Baie, (où les privilèges réclamés par la Compagnie ne pouvaient être contestés si cette charte avait quelque valeur) et que cette expédition n'avait pas provoqué de procédés judiciaires. Comment alors Lord Selkirk pouvait-il espérer que les Bourgeois lui reconnussent le droit de les chasser, au moyen de cette charte, d'un pays que les Français, avant eux, avaient exploité et exploré en tous sens, et qu'ils occupaient eux-mêmes depuis si longtemps ?

On a beaucoup reproché à la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest de n'avoir pas vu d'un bon œil les projets de colonisation de Lord Selkirk. On lui a reproché d'avoir mis tout en jeu pour décourager les nouveaux colons, amener contre eux les Métis, et même les tribus Sauvages. Cette dernière accusation surtout a été repoussée avec indignation par la Compagnie.

Si, dans l'ardeur de la lutte qui suivit l'acte arbitraire du gouverneur d'Assiniboia, quelques paroles imprudentes ont été dites, quelques lettres compromettantes ont été écrites par des membres de la Compagnie, irrités de cette manière d'agir, il n'en ressort pas moins clairement de l'enquête faite par ordre du gouvernement canadien, en 1817, qu'une si monstrueuse accusation ne pouvait être prouvée.

Les chefs et les principaux employés de la Compagnie connaissaient trop bien le caractère des Sauvages pour avoir recours à un moyen qui leur aurait été encore plus désastreux qu'aux colons. Les Sauvages une fois déchaînés contre les Blancs auraient massacré indistinctement les colons et les serviteurs de la Compagnie dispersés dans les différents postes du Nord-Ouest.

Les Bourgeois, plus intéressés à la traite qu'à la colonisation du pays, ne voyaient probablement pas avec plus de faveur que ne l'avait fait avant eux la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, l'établissement de colonies au milieu de leurs pays de chasse. Le colon est ordinairement mauvais trappeur, et, pour les fins de leur trafic, il leur fallait des trappeurs et non des agriculteurs.

Cette préoccupation, assez naturelle d'ailleurs, eût-elle existé, que leurs adversaires n'auraient pas eu le droit de s'en plaindre. Cependant, comme la chasse était presque entièrement détruite dans le voisinage des nouveaux établissements, il est probable que les Bourgeois n'auraient jamais fait la guerre au projet de Lord Selkirk s'ils s'étaient trouvés en sûreté avec Sa Seigneurie.

Si la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest n'a eu que peu de foi dans le succès de cette colonie ainsi jetée à des centaines de lieues de toute civilisation, et éloignée de toute voie facile de communication pour l'exportation de ses produits, elle n'a fait que partager en cela l'opinion généralement admise. Il est très probable que,

sans la découverte de la vapeur, cette colonie qui aujourd'hui promet de devenir l'un des plus riches greniers du Canada, aurait continué de languir comme elle l'a fait jusqu'à sa réunion avec le Canada et jusqu'à la construction du chemin de fer du Pacifique.

La Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson n'a eu foi en la colonisation que lorsqu'elle vit son commerce ruiné par la compétition que lui faisait celle du Nord-Ouest, et elle cessa d'y croire lorsque sa rivale disparut, à la réunion des deux Compagnies, en 1821. Depuis lors Assiniboia n'a fait que végéter, ses colons ayant été plus encouragés à courir la plaine, à la recherche du buffle et du castor, qu'à cultiver un sol dont la Compagnie maîtresse a, tour à tour, vanté ou déprécié la valeur, selon qu'il convenait à ses intérêts.

En 1857, plus de trente-cinq ans après la disparition des courageux pionniers du commerce canadien dans l'Ouest, Sir George Simpson, alors gouverneur de la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson depuis à peu près le même nombre d'années, et qui avait résidé à la Rivière-Rouge et visité tout le Nord-Ouest, disait, devant un comité de la Chambre des Communes, qu'il croyait tout le territoire de la Baie d'Hudson, y compris la colonie de Lord Selkirk, impropre à la culture. Il fit du pays en général la plus triste description, admettant en même temps que les rapports favorables qu'il en avait faits antérieurement étaient exagérés et inexacts.

Est-il étonnant que, quarante ans auparavant, la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest ait eu peu de foi dans les entreprises colonisatrices de Lord Selkirk, et ait attribué son zèle à des motifs intéressés ?

La lettre de M. Miles MacDonnell fut le signal de la guerre acharnée que se firent, de 1814 à 1819, les deux Compagnies, toutes deux s'appuyant le plus souvent sur l'autorité de commissions spéciales de la paix, émises pour les pays sauvages, et abusant de cette autorité pour commettre, au nom de la loi, toutes sortes d'injustices et de vilenies.

M. MacDonnell, qui agissait tantôt en qualité d'agent de Lord Selkirk, tantôt en qualité de magistrat, et le plus souvent comme gouverneur, quoiqu'il ne fût pas même assermenté, commença la série des violences légales en faisant attaquer le poste de la Rivière Souris, l'entrepôt de provisions de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, et en y faisant enlever de force plusieurs ballots de viande sèche.

M. Duncan Cameron, Bourgeois énergique et intelligent, mais beaucoup trop violent pour occuper une position qui demandait une grande prudence, de la modération et un jugement consommé, continua la série des irrégularités légales en faisant, au moyen d'un bref émis par M. McLeod, Bourgeois de la Compagnie, et par conséquent partie intéressée, arrêter M. MacDonnell et son shérif pour saisie illégale, effraction et vol à main armée, et en les faisant transporter à Montréal, c'est à

dire à des centaines de lieues, pour leur faire subir un procès qui fut en définitive abandonné sous le prétexte qu'il était impossible de prouver une intention félonieuse, et qu'il n'y avait peut-être que méprise de droit.

Quoi qu'il en soit, la colonie fut privée de son chef, et bientôt dispersée. La maison du gouverneur, le moulin et plusieurs autres constructions furent incendiés par les Métis et les Sauvages, et les colons reprirent la route de la Baie d'Hudson.

Pendant que ces événements se passaient à la Rivière Rouge, Lord Selkirk se préparait, au moyen d'un nouvel envoi de colons d'Ecosse et d'une formidable expédition de traite au Nord, à frapper un coup qui devait, dans sa pensée, assurer l'existence de sa colonie, et, en même temps, détruire la puissance de ses rivaux.

Les départements du Nord : l'Ile à la Crosse, l'Athabaska, la Rivière la Paix, le Lac des Esclaves, la Rivière McKenzie, étaient en dehors des limites extrêmes réclamées, en vertu de sa charte, par la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, et nous avons vu que, malgré les efforts de cette dernière pour y pénétrer, sa rivale y dominait presque sans conteste, et en retirait la plus grande partie de ses profits.

Lord Selkirk résolut d'y porter la guerre. Ne pouvant compter sur ses colons et guère plus sur les employés et les *Orkney men* de la Compagnie, qui n'avaient ni l'activité, ni la vigueur nécessaires, il chargea M. Colin Robertson, ancien commis retiré de la Compagnie

du Nord-Ouest, homme énergique et violent, de recruter à Montréal, au moyen de fortes primes, nombre des meilleurs Voyageurs qui avaient à maintes reprises servi sous les Bourgeois.

Au printemps de 1815, M. Robertson s'embarqua plein de courage et bien déterminé à triompher. Arrivé cependant au Lac Winnipeg, où s'étaient réfugiés les colons après la destruction de l'établissement de la Rivière Rouge, il se décida à y rester, et confia l'expédition à son second, M. Clarke (1), autre commis démissionnaire de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest.

Jamais opposition ne s'était encore annoncée aussi formidable. Commandée par un chef habile et expérimenté; composée d'hommes choisis, et pourvue, à l'excès même, des marchandises les plus recherchées par les Sauvages, tout lui faisait présager un succès certain; et cependant aucune expédition peut-être ne subit d'aussi grands désastres, n'obtint d'aussi faibles résultats.

Parties trop tard de l'Ile à la Crosse, les différentes brigades n'atteignirent leurs hivernements qu'après avoir souffert d'effroyables privations. Celle qui était destinée à la Rivière la Paix, perdit un commis, seize Voyageurs, une femme et un enfant, tous morts de faim. Dans les endroits où il y avait des postes de la Compagnie du

(1) M. John Clarke, après avoir servi plusieurs années dans la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, la laissa pour devenir un des propriétaires dans la Compagnie de M. Astor. Après la dissolution de cette compagnie, il retourna à ses anciens Bourgeois, pour les laisser de nouveau et se mettre au service de la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson.

Nord-Ouest, ces malheureux purent échapper au désastre en entrant en arrangement avec leurs rivaux, qui leur firent payer cher leurs secours, prenant invariablement en gage leurs marchandises de traite, et les privant ainsi de toutes chances de succès (1).

IX

Monsieur Semple est nommé gouverneur de la colonie d'Assiniboia.—Bataille du 19 juin 1816 ; mort de M. Semple et seconde destruction de la colonie.—Efforts des Bourgeois pour conclure un arrangement. — Messieurs Coltman et Fletcher sont chargés d'une investigation. — L'attentat du Grand Rapide ; mort de M. Benjamin Frobisher.—Expédition du Lieutenant Franklin.—Mort de Lord Selkirk et de Sir Alexander MacKenzie.—Réunion des Compagnies du Nord-Ouest et de la Baie d'Hudson.

Pendant que M. Robertson organisait sa malheureuse expédition au nord, Lord Selkirk expédiait d'Ecosse de nouveaux colons, qui arrivèrent au printemps à la Baie et durent y attendre monsieur Semple, que la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson avait nommé comme successeur de M. MacDonnell. M. Semple ramassa en route les débris de la colonie dispersée l'année précédente, arriva à la Rivière Rouge à l'automne et se mit immédiatement à l'œuvre pour rétablir la colonie.

(1) Voir Lettres de M. Wentzel.

Le nouveau gouverneur était un homme peu conciliant, il est vrai, mais intelligent, honorable et intègre. Etranger aux querelles qui avaient amené la ruine de la colonie naissante, il aurait probablement réussi à y rétablir la paix, en attendant une décision des tribunaux, et à adoucir les relations entre les deux partis, mais, sous l'inspiration de M. Robertson, il fut bientôt entraîné sur les traces de son prédécesseur.

Sous le prétexte de retrouver une partie des objets qui avaient disparu lors de la destruction de la colonie par les Métis, mais plus probablement dans le but de mettre à exécution les ordres de M. MacDonnell relatifs à l'exportation des vivres, il envoya des bandes armées s'emparer des postes de la Compagnie, à l'embouchure de l'Assiniboine et à Pembina.

Au Fort Gibraltar, M. Cameron fut fait prisonnier, les provisions furent confisquées, les armes, les pelleteries, les marchandises et les livres de la Compagnie furent enlevés, le fort lui-même fut complètement détruit et ses décombres utilisés par les colons. Ceux qui s'étaient plaints du procédé rigoureux dont on s'était servi en faisant conduire M. MacDonnell jusqu'à Montréal pour lui faire subir son procès, n'hésitèrent pas à diriger de force M. Cameron vers la Baie d'Hudson et à le traîner de là en Angleterre, d'où il dut revenir au Canada sans avoir même subi un procès, ni Lord Selkirk, ni la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson n'ayant formulé de plainte contre lui.

Ces nombreux actes de violence commis de part et d'autre, ces abus de la loi sans cesse répétés, avaient tellement aigri les esprits qu'il était devenu évident qu'à la première occasion, les chicanes et les persécutions judiciaires seraient suivies de voies de fait plus sérieuses. En effet, au mois de juin, il fut livré, aux portes mêmes du fort Douglas, un combat en règle qui coûta la vie au gouverneur et à une vingtaine de ses soldats, et amena la seconde dispersion de la colonie.

Des volumes ont été écrits, de part et d'autres, sur le combat du 19 juin 1816. Les principaux auteurs du drame ont été traduits devant les tribunaux criminels, et, après de nombreux témoignages contradictoires, ont été acquittés ; ce qui n'empêcha pas les partisans de Lord Selkirk de soutenir que l'attaque du fort Douglass avait été le résultat d'un plan préparé de longue main par les Bourgeois et la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest.

Une étude impartiale de la preuve fournie des deux côtés ferait plutôt croire à un enchaînement de circonstances malheureuses, nées de la vive irritation que des violences réciproques avaient entretenue dans le pays, et de l'appréhension de violences nouvelles.

Les Bourgeois avaient eu leur postes pillés et rasés en conséquence des ordres arbitraires de M. MacDonnell ; les provisions qui leur étaient indispensables avaient été saisies de force et confisquées ; des batteries de canons avaient été placées sur les bords de l'Assiniboine, leur seule voie de communication par eau avec la Rivière

Rouge, le Lac Winnipeg et le Nord, et une goélette armée en guerre avait été placée à l'embouchure de la Rivière Winnipeg, pour arrêter de force les brigades venant de Montréal avec les marchandises de traite. Ils étaient en conséquence parfaitement convaincus que, s'ils ne faisaient accompagner leurs convois de provisions par un nombre d'hommes suffisant pour les protéger, ces provisions seraient saisies et confisquées comme les autres l'avaient été précédemment.

Les Bourgeois n'étant pas en force suffisante pour forcer le blocus de la Rivière Assiniboine et passer sous les canons de *Fort Douglass*, il fut décidé d'éviter les fourches de la Rivière Rouge et de faire passer un convoi à travers les prairies, à une aussi grande distance que possible du fort. Des ordres furent donnés d'éviter tout conflit avec les gens de Lord Selkirk, mais cependant de résister par la force des armes, si cela devenait nécessaire, à toute nouvelle tentative de confiscation.

D'un autre côté, les nouvelles les plus alarmantes avaient été répandues parmi les colons et l'entourage de M. Semple. On disait que la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest avait résolu une seconde dispersion de la colonie; que des assemblées hostiles avaient été tenues, où l'on avait fortement surexcité les Métis et les Sauvages, et que le plan avait été formé d'attaquer les colons eux-mêmes et de détruire leurs établissements.

Tel était l'état des esprits lorsque le convoi de provisions arriva dans le voisinage de *Fort Douglass*. M.

Semple, voyant une bande nombreuse éviter le fort et se diriger vers les établissements du bas de la rivière, soupçonna tout naturellement un mouvement hostile contre les colons, et sortit accompagné d'une vingtaine d'hommes armés, afin de se renseigner, et, au besoin, de prêter main-forte aux colons. Les Métis, de leur côté, voyant une troupe sortir de Fort Douglass et les poursuivre,—car ils avaient dépassé le fort,—crurent à une nouvelle attaque, firent volte-face et vinrent à la rencontre des assaillants, laissant une partie des leurs à la garde du convoi.

La maladresse d'un des soldats de M. Semple, qui déchargea accidentellement son fusil, augmenta l'irritation des Métis et ne contribua pas peu à hâter le dénouement. Il paraît évident, cependant, par les premiers mots qui furent échangés entre M. Semple et le chef de la bande, que ni les uns ni les autres n'avaient l'intention d'en venir aux mains, et qu'ils tenaient plutôt à s'assurer de leurs intentions réciproques.

—Que voulez-vous ? dit Boucher.

—Que voulez-vous vous-même ? répond M. Semple.

Boucher ayant donné une réponse insolente, M. Semple, irrité, saisit la carabine du Métis ainsi que la bride de son cheval, et ordonne à ses soldats de s'emparer de lui. Presque au même moment, deux coups de fusil se font entendre : le gouverneur et un de ses officiers tombent frappés à mort. A la seconde décharge presque tous les hommes qui accompagnaient le gou-

verneur sont tués ou blessés ; quelques-uns seulement peuvent atteindre le fort, dont les Métis prennent possession le lendemain.

La colonie fut ainsi une seconde fois détruite, et les colons durent se réfugier sur les bords du Lac Winnipeg, en attendant qu'il leur fût porté secours.

Nous avons vu que la création d'une grande route commerciale à travers le continent avait toujours été l'idée dominante de Sir Alexander MacKenzie, et qu'il n'espérait en voir la réalisation qu'au moyen de la réunion des deux grandes compagnies rivales qui se disputaient la traite de l'Ouest. Il avait même fait, paraît-il, des efforts, en 1801, auprès du gouvernement impérial pour l'engager à s'intéresser à cette grande œuvre.

Les personnages les plus marquants de la Compagnie partageaient les idées, sinon les motifs, de Sir Alexander MacKenzie à ce sujet, et, en 1804, M. Alexander Ellice, un des Bourgeois et, en même temps, un des associés de la maison Phyn, Inglis et Cie, de Londres, qui avait fait de fortes avances à la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, entreprit d'acheter, pour le compte de cette dernière, les actions de la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson qu'il aurait pu alors acquérir en totalité pour £100,000.

Les négociations manquèrent cependant, parce que la plus grande partie de ces actions était alors entre les mains de mineurs ou de personnes qui ne pouvaient en disposer sans une autorisation des tribunaux que M.

Ellice ne jugea pas à propos de faire demander, car il désirait tenir la transaction secrète.

Ces tentatives de réunion, nous l'avons vu, furent renouvelées, en 1811, par Sir Alexander MacKenzie, mais sans résultat, et les deux compagnies continuèrent leur lutte ruineuse.

Pendant que Lord Selkirk préparait ses deux expéditions à l'intérieur, les agents de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, alarmés des proportions que prenait la lutte et des résultats désastreux qu'elle pourrait avoir, faisaient de nouvelles ouvertures à la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, et lui proposaient soit d'exploiter la traite à frais et profits communs, soit de répartir les postes de traite en deux divisions dont chacune serait exclusivement exploitée par la compagnie à laquelle elle serait assignée. Dans le premier cas, ils cédaient à leurs rivaux un tiers de la traite ; dans le second, ils se réservaient les départements du Nord, et laissaient à la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson les deux tiers des départements de l'Ouest et du Sud, ainsi que les pêcheries de la Baie.

Si Lord Selkirk avait eu en vue surtout les intérêts de la colonisation, il se serait empressé de faciliter un arrangement qui donnait à la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson une plus grande part dans la traite qu'elle n'avait le droit d'espérer, et assurait à ses colons le bon vouloir et l'assistance de ses rivaux. Tout au contraire, il fit faire à ceux-ci des contre-propositions qu'il savait

ne pouvoir être acceptées, offrant de s'abstenir de faire la traite dans les départements du Nord, où la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson avait alors à peine pu pénétrer, et encore moins s'établir, à la condition que les Bourgeois vinssent à renoncer à la traite sur les territoires s'étendant de la Baie d'Hudson aux Montagnes Rocheuses.

Comme il fallait aux Bourgeois des postes de relais et de secours entre le Canada et les départements du Nord, Lord Selkirk proposa cependant de leur en louer quelques uns pour un temps limité, pourvu qu'ils consentissent à laisser soumettre à un arbitrage la question des droits exclusifs de la traite.

Les Bourgeois ne pouvaient accepter un arrangement qui les chassait d'un pays qui leur était indispensable pour leurs approvisionnements, et dont, après des années de travail, ils contrôlaient presque entièrement la traite.

“ Lord Selkirk ayant proposé la voie d'arbitrage”, disent-ils dans leur réponse à l'ultimatum de ce dernier, “ la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest répond que ce moyen n'offre aucune réciprocité quelconque. En effet, la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson réclamant des droits exclusifs, si ces droits deviennent l'objet d'un arbitrage, et si celui-ci tourne en sa faveur, elle dépossèdera la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest de son commerce; si, au contraire, la sentence arbitrale est défavorable à la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, cette compagnie n'en conti-

nuera pas moins à jouir, concurremment avec celle du Nord-Ouest, des droits attachés à la qualité de sujets britanniques. Ainsi, sous l'apparence spécieuse d'un arbitrage, la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest s'exposerait à perdre le réel et le solide pour n'embrasser qu'une chimère.

“ C'est à la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson à prendre ou à ne pas prendre, selon qu'elle le jugera à propos, des mesures convenables pour obtenir des cours régulières de justice une décision légale sur ses prétentions au commerce exclusif ; cette initiative ne saurait être dévolue à la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest en ce que, depuis de longues années, elle n'a cessé d'user et de faire son profit de ces droits généraux de commerce qu'elle invoque et dont elle ne se départira qu'en autant qu'elle y sera légalement contrainte.

“ Sur le tout, il est pénible à la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest de se voir obligée de cesser maintenant toute négociation comme ne présentant plus d'espoir, et de se voir engagée dans une contestation pécuniaire qu'elle ne peut éviter, et dans laquelle elle doit rester engagée jusqu'à ce que la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson envisage sous un autre point de vue ses véritables intérêts”.

Lord Selkirk, ayant fait manquer les négociations, se met à l'œuvre, avec son énergie ordinaire, pour préparer de nouvelles expéditions qui devaient, espérait-il, achever la destruction de ses rivaux, qu'il croyait presque

écrasés par celle de M. Clarke dont il ne connaissait pas les tristes résultats.

Il se fait nommer juge de paix, et obtient du gouverneur une garde-du-corps composée de réguliers pour se protéger contre ses adversaires. Ne trouvant pas sa garde suffisante, il engage près de cent cinquante soldats licenciés des Meurons et Watteville, leur procure des armes, exige qu'ils soient vêtus de leurs uniformes militaires et commandés par leurs officiers ; puis, escorté de ces singuliers colons et de plus de cent Voyageurs, il part pour la Rivière Rouge par la voie de Duluth et du Lac Rouge.

Ayant appris en route la mort de M. Semple et l'expulsion de ses colons, au lieu d'avancer en toute hâte pour recueillir les débris épars de sa colonie, il prend la résolution d'aller lui-même venger la loi outragée, à Fort William, le quartier général et le principal entrepôt de ses adversaires. Ne trouvant pas de magistrat désintéressé pour l'accompagner, il se décide " bien à contre cœur ", dit-il, à s'y rendre seul pour y agir comme accusateur et juge et faire exécuter ses jugements par les troupes qui l'accompagnent.

Arrivé sur les lieux au milieu d'août, il s'empresse d'émettre un mandat d'arrestation contre tous les Bourgeois qui se trouvent au Fort William, comme complices des crimes qui s'étaient commis à la Rivière-Rouge. Il ordonne que leurs livres, leurs marchandises et leurs pelleteries soient saisis, et confie l'exécution de ses or-

dres à un capitaine d'Orsonnens, officier des Meurons, qui, à la tête d'une bande armée, les exécute avec une rigueur et une violence qui se sentent plutôt du partisan que du soldat.

Les Bourgeois furent expédiés au Canada, où, pendant plus de deux ans, ils attendirent leur procès, qui se termina par un acquittement honorable, la Cour ayant déclaré qu'il n'y avait pas l'ombre d'une preuve de culpabilité contre eux.

Lord Selkirk, sous le prétexte qu'il était trop tard pour monter à la Rivière-Rouge, envoya une partie de ses hommes en avant, et passa l'hiver au Fort William, exerçant contre la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest et ses employés toutes sortes de vexations dont il eut plus tard à rendre compte devant les tribunaux civils, et ne partit qu'en mai pour la Rivière-Rouge, accompagné de ses soldats.

Sur ces entrefaites, le gouvernement canadien, alarmé des proportions que prenait la lutte et de l'abus que l'on faisait des commissions de la paix, nomma l'honorable William B. Coltman, un des membres du conseil exécutif du Bas-Canada, et M. John Fletcher, avocat, commissaires spéciaux, et les chargea de faire une investigation sur tous les événements qui avaient troublé la paix à la Rivière-Rouge et au Fort William (1).

Le gouvernement fit aussi lancer, le 3 mai 1817, au nom du Prince Régent, qui gouvernait alors durant la

(1) L'honorable Barthélemi Joliette, l'illustre fondateur de la ville de Joliette, alors notaire à l'Assomption, fut nommé secrétaire de cette commission.

maladie de George III, une proclamation révoquant toutes les commissions de la paix émises antérieurement pour les territoires du Nord-Ouest, et donnant à MM. Coltman et Fletcher les pouvoirs les plus étendus. Elle commandait aux officiers et aux soldats de laisser le service des parties contestantes ; elle ordonnait la restitution immédiate des postes, propriétés et marchandises qui avaient été confisqués ou enlevés, l'ouverture des rivières et cours d'eau qui avaient été bloqués, et le rétablissement des choses dans l'état où elles étaient avant les troubles, laissant à chacun de se pourvoir plus tard devant les tribunaux.

M. Coltman arriva au Fort William le 12 juin 1817. Les rapports alarmants qu'il reçut sur l'état des esprits lui firent hâter son départ pour la Rivière Rouge, où il s'empressa d'établir ses quartiers entre ceux des deux partis, afin de pouvoir mieux les surveiller et les contraindre à maintenir la paix.

Les postes, marchandises, provisions et pelleteries furent, durant l'été, restitués à leurs propriétaires respectifs, les voies de communication furent ouvertes, et les commissaires purent retourner au Canada à l'automne avec l'espoir que les ordres du Prince Régent seraient respectés.

Ils firent un rapport très circonstancié de leur mission. Les deux partis s'en plaignirent, ce qui ferait supposer qu'il était impartial et juste. Les partisans de Lord Selkirk surtout l'attaquèrent avec violence,

comme, d'ailleurs, ils avaient attaqué tous les procédés pris soit par le gouverneur, soit par les juges, les accusant tous, même les jurés, qui l'avaient condamné, de partialité et de parti-pris.

M. Cauchon, dans son habile mémoire de 1857 sur la question des frontières et des droits de la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, dit que la proclamation du Prince Régent et la création de la commission d'enquête eurent pour effet de mettre un terme à toutes les difficultés dans le Nord-Ouest, et que tous se soumirent immédiatement à leur autorité. Il n'en fut cependant pas ainsi dans les départements situés loin de l'œil des commissaires.

Nous avons vu, dans un chapitre précédent, que M. Robertson, se voyant retenu à la Rivière Rouge, avait chargé son lieutenant, M. Clarke, de conduire dans les départements du Nord la formidable expédition de traite qui devait, espérait Lord Selkirk, enlever à la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest la prépondérance dont elle y jouissait.

Un des premiers actes de M. Clarke, en arrivant à la Rivière La Paix, fut d'attaquer à main armée le Fort Vermillon, appartenant aux Bourgeois, afin de s'emparer de leurs provisions. Vigoureusement reçu par M. MacIntosh, le Bourgeois résident, il fut contraint de battre en retraite sans avoir réussi dans son projet. D'un autre côté, MM. Black et McGillivray, sous le prétexte que M. Robertson avait poussé les Sauvages

au massacre des "Canadiens", et que leurs hommes refuseraient de servir si l'on ne faisait un exemple, le firent prisonnier au Lac Athabaska où ils le gardèrent tout un hiver (1).

Ces vexations n'étaient que des abus de la force auxquels on pouvait s'attendre en des temps aussi tourmentés et à une aussi grande distance des tribunaux, mais l'été de 1819 vit un abus d'autorité qui rappelait les plus mauvais jours de 1815 et 1816, et eut dans le temps un grand retentissement.

On se rappelle qu'à la suite des troubles qui avaient précédé la proclamation du Prince Régent, des procédures vexatoires avaient été prises contre nombre de Bourgeois accusés de complicité dans les crimes commis à la Rivière-Rouge. Ces Bourgeois avaient, pour la plupart, subi leurs procès, et été acquittés ; quelques uns cependant étaient alors tout à fait au nord du continent et même à la Rivière McKenzie, où ils apprirent qu'on les avait accusés au Canada. Fort de leur innocence, ils se hâtèrent de descendre afin de se livrer aux autorités.

M. Williams, qui avait succédé à M. Semple comme gouverneur de la colonie d'Assiniboia, désirant sans doute effectuer lui-même leur arrestation, et peut-être aussi venger l'emprisonnement de M. Robertson, résolut d'aller, accompagné d'un détachement de soldats Meurons—qu'il aurait dû, au contraire, licencier selon les

(1) Voir Lettres de M. Wentzel.

ordres du Prince Régent—et de deux pièces de canons, attendre les Bourgeois au portage du Grand Rapide, par où ils devaient nécessairement passer pour entrer dans le Lac Winnipeg, et s'y mit en embuscade.

Les Bourgeois et leur suite, qui ne soupçonnaient pas que l'on eût l'intention de faire violence à des personnes qui s'imposaient un semblable trajet pour se livrer à la justice, arrivèrent les uns après les autres et à plusieurs jours d'intervalle, au Grand Rapide, où ils furent brutalement assaillis par les soldats et soumis par eux à toutes sortes de mauvais traitements et de violences, sous les yeux mêmes de M. Williams.

On permit à quelques-uns,—ceux contre lesquels il n'y avait aucune accusation, et dont, par conséquent, la présence au Canada n'était pas nécessaire,—de continuer leur route; les autres furent pour la plupart expédiés à la Baie d'Hudson.

Si M. Williams n'avait eu en vue que les intérêts de la justice, il se serait empressé de faire escorter ces accusés au Canada, où on les attendait au mois d'octobre pour leur faire subir leur procès. Il les fit, au contraire, transporter à York Factory, où ils furent, pendant plusieurs semaines, détenus prisonniers et ignominieusement traités jusqu'à l'arrivée du lieutenant Franklin, qui se préparait à entreprendre son célèbre voyage par terre à l'Océan Glacial.

Franklin avait auprès des Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest des lettres de recommandation qu'il ne

s'attendait pas à remettre dans des conditions aussi pénibles. Les égards que lui et sa suite eurent pour les prisonniers contrastaient tellement avec la conduite de M. Williams et des siens, que ces derniers crurent prudent de se montrer plus humains. MM. McTavish et Shaw obtinrent, après avoir donné les garanties les plus amples, de partir pour l'Angleterre comme passagers d'entrepont dans le navire qui avait amené Franklin. Ils y furent mis en liberté, personne ne s'étant présenté pour donner suite aux accusations portées contre eux !

MM. Duncan Campbell et Benjamin Frobisher, ayant aussi demandé la permission de passer en Angleterre, se la virent refuser. M. Campbell fut envoyé au Canada par *Moose Factory* et Michipicoton, et y fut mis en liberté. Quant à M. Frobisher, contre qui il n'y avait aucune accusation ni mandat d'arrestation, mais que l'on voulait punir pour avoir osé résister à l'arrestation illégale opérée au Grand Rapide, il fut retenu prisonnier avec deux Voyageurs.

M. Frobisher était un homme d'une force peu commune et d'une stature herculéenne. Il avait eu, en maintes occasions, maille à partir avec les gens de la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, auxquels il n'avait voulu céder en aucune circonstance. D'une nature généreuse, énergique, violente même, il ne sut pas prendre sa captivité en patience. Les mauvais traitements qu'il avait endurés au Grand Rapide, les coups de crosse de fusil qu'il

avait reçus à la tête, avaient produit chez lui des effets désastreux. Il devint bientôt sombre et taciturne, subissant par moment des crises épouvantables d'hallucination, et ne rêvant qu'aux moyens de s'évader de sa prison et de regagner, à pied s'il le fallait, le premier poste de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, éloigné de près de cinq cents milles en ligne directe (1).

Ses deux compagnons, Amable Turcotte et Joseph Lépine, s'efforcèrent, à plusieurs reprises, de lui faire comprendre l'extravagance d'un tel projet, mais ils ne purent longtemps résister à cette autorité et à ce prestige que les Bourgeois exerçaient toujours sur leurs hommes. Il finit par les entraîner, et, le 30 septembre, après avoir éludé la vigilance des gardiens, les trois prisonniers réussissent à s'emparer d'un vieux canot, y cachent quelques livres de pémican qu'ils ont économisé sur leurs rations, quelques vêtements, un vieux filet, et commencent leur pénible voyage.

Après avoir marché pendant deux mois, souffrant de la faim et du froid; après avoir dévoré jusqu'à des morceaux de peaux de buffle que des Sauvages avaient laissés suspendus aux arbres pour reconnaître leur route, M. Frobisher tomba enfin, épuisé, et ne put plus se relever.

Les fugitifs n'étaient plus qu'à deux jours de marche du Lac l'Original, près du Lac Bourbon, où la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest avait un poste. M. Frobisher

(1) Voir lettre de M. Wentzel.

supplia ses compagnons, qui avaient, quoique épuisés eux-mêmes, poussé le dévouement jusqu'à le porter, par intervalles, sur leurs épaules, de l'abandonner et d'aller chercher du secours. Ils s'y décident enfin, et, après avoir installé l'infortuné Bourgeois auprès d'un bon feu, avoir mis du bois sec à sa portée, fait griller un morceau de peau de buffle pour sa nourriture, ils partent pour le fort, qu'ils ne peuvent cependant atteindre que quatre jours après, ayant plusieurs fois perdu leur route.

Les hommes envoyés au secours de M. Frobisher n'arrivèrent à l'endroit où il avait été laissé, que le 27 novembre, et trouvèrent son corps étendu en travers du brasier et en partie brûlé. On trouva sur le cadavre un journal qu'il avait tenu depuis son arrestation au Grand Rapide et dans lequel il avait consigné ses souffrances de tous les jours. (1)

Les Bourgeois étaient réunis en assemblée générale au Fort William lorsque la nouvelle de l'attentat du Grand Rapide y arriva. Les agents de la compagnie s'adressèrent immédiatement au gouverneur-général, le duc de Richmond, lui représentant que si les autorités n'intervenaient bientôt pour faire respecter les ordres du Prince Régent, les intérêts de la Compagnie du

(1) Ce journal fut déposé entre les mains de M. William Connelly, Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest au Fort Cumberland. Plusieurs extraits en sont intercalés dans une intéressante relation, faite par M. Samuel Wilcox, un des employés de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, qui sera publiée dans ce recueil.

MM. Williams et Clarke ont été mis en accusation devant les tribunaux de Québec le 29 octobre 1819, mais nous n'avons pu constater le résultat de cette procédure.

Nord-Ouest seraient gravement et injustement compromis.

Le gouverneur était alors dans le Haut-Canada. Il s'empressa, cependant, d'envoyer un des officiers de sa suite, le major McLeod, porteur de dépêches enjoignant l'obéissance à tous, et le fit accompagner par Sir Charles Saxton, en qui il avait la plus entière confiance, faisant, en même temps, comprendre aux pétitionnaires que des pouvoirs plus étendus auraient été confiés à ces officiers si le gouverneur n'avait été éloigné de sa province et de ses aviseurs constitutionnels.

Les envoyés du gouverneur se rendirent immédiatement à Fort William, et ils se dirigeaient vers le Grand Rapide lorsqu'ils apprirent que M. Williams avait levé le blocus de la rivière, et s'était retiré vers la Baie avec ses soldats et ses prisonniers. La saison était trop avancée pour qu'ils songeassent à l'y suivre, et leurs pouvoirs trop restreints pour y être d'une grande utilité. Ils revinrent au Canada après avoir expédié les dépêches à l'intérieur.

De leur côté, les agents de la Compagnie résidant à Londres, ne restèrent pas oisifs. Ils s'adressèrent au gouvernement impérial, sollicitant son intervention pour mettre un terme aux violences de Lord Selkirk et de la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, rappelant qu'ils avaient souvent demandé que les droits de cette dernière fussent soumis aux tribunaux, et prévenant en même temps les autorités que, puisque leurs

rivaux méprisaient les ordres du Prince Régent, les Bourgeois ne pourraient plus à l'avenir confier leurs personnes et leurs biens uniquement à la protection d'une autorité ayant son siège beaucoup trop éloigné, et à laquelle on désobéissait avec impunité.

Les agents ajoutaient que, si la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson ou Lord Selkirk tentaient de nouveau d'exercer un pouvoir que les Bourgeois avaient tout lieu de croire illégal, et qui avait pour but la destruction de leur commerce, il était à craindre qu'en résistant à ces attentats, il ne s'ensuivit des conséquences aussi fatales que celles que l'on avait déjà eu à déplorer dans ce malheureux pays.

Cette énergique protestation obtint le résultat voulu ; des ordres péremptoires furent de nouveau donnés et communiqués aux directeurs de la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, qui, effrayés de la tournure qu'allaient prendre les choses, avaient déjà désavoué leur gouverneur, M. Williams.

L'expédition de Franklin, mal organisée dès l'origine, très peu pourvue de provisions et conduite d'une manière imprudente, se termina par un effroyable désastre.

Franklin s'est plaint de n'avoir pas été aidé, comme il avait lieu de l'espérer, par la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, et encore moins par celle de la Baie d'Hudson. Il avait eu tout un hiver pour faire faire, sous sa propre surveillance, les préparatifs nécessaires, et, malgré cela,

il laissa le Fort Chippewean si tard—le 10 juillet—qu'il ne put, pendant l'été de 1820, se rendre au-delà du Fort Entreprise, à une distance de cent vingt-cinq lieues, et dut y passer un second hiver.

Six jours après son départ du Fort Providence, situé au nord du Lac des Esclaves; l'expédition manquait déjà de vivres, et il fallut avoir recours aux conserves. Est-il étonnant que les Voyageurs, habitués à plus de prévoyance de la part de leurs chefs canadiens, aient été parfois découragés et se soient plaints ?

Franklin et le docteur Richardson, dans la relation de leur voyage, ont été très sévères et même injustes à l'égard de ces malheureux Voyageurs, qui, sans espoir de voir leurs noms passer à la postérité, sacrifièrent leur vie en accomplissant fidèlement leur devoir. On y voit, à maintes reprises, les remarques les plus malveillantes à leur adresse, spécialement sur leur prétendu manque de courage et leur gourmandise.

Vu les rapports contradictoires qui ont été faits par les chefs de l'expédition et les Voyageurs, les détails de cette triste expédition, concernant la mort de l'infortuné Hood, celle de l'Iroquois Michel et d'un certain nombre de Voyageurs, ne seront peut-être jamais connus d'une manière précise, ni la part des responsabilités parfaitement déterminée. Un fait remarquable, cependant, c'est que, des cinq étrangers qui composaient l'expédition : le lieutenant Franklin, le docteur Richardson, les aspirants de marine Black et Hood et

le matelot Hepburn,—tous peu habitués à la rude vie d'explorateurs, et dont un était malade au départ,—pas un seul, selon la version du docteur Richardson, n'aurait succombé sous le poids des fatigues et des privations, tandis que tous les Voyageurs, sauf cinq, périrent de faim et de misère, quelques uns même sous les yeux de leurs chefs.

M. Wentzel, commis de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, qui accompagna pendant quelque temps l'expédition, donne, dans ses lettres à M. Roderic McKenzie, des appréciations qui iraient fort à réhabiliter la mémoire de ces malheureux et à mettre en doute les rapports faits par les chefs.

Lord Selkirk laissa le Canada en 1818, froissé dans son orgueil et irrité contre les autorités canadiennes, qui, disait-il, ne lui avaient pas accordé l'encouragement auquel il avait droit, et contre les tribunaux canadiens, qui, prétendait-il, l'avaient injustement condamné.

Sa santé, fortement ébranlée par les anxiétés et les ennuis qu'il avait éprouvés, l'obligea d'aller chercher le repos dans le midi de la France ; mais le mal était irréparable. Il mourut à Pau, en avril 1820, entouré de sa femme et de ses enfants, et laissant derrière lui un grand nombre d'amis et de fervents admirateurs de ses hautes qualités intellectuelles, de son courage et de son indomptable énergie.

Le même printemps vit disparaître son grand antagoniste, lui aussi épuisé par une vie de travail, de fatigue et de privation.

Sir Alexander MacKenzie avait laissé le Canada en 1808, après avoir brigué et obtenu les suffrages des électeurs de Huntingdon. Il continua, ainsi que nous l'avons vu, à s'occuper en Angleterre des affaires de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, et fut, avec M. Simon McGillivray, l'âme de la lutte contre Lord Selkirk.

En 1813, il épousa une charmante jeune femme de son nom et il s'acheta une propriété dans les *Hihglands*, où il aurait bien voulu attirer M. Roderic McKenzie et ses anciens amis du Canada. Il ne put y jouir longtemps de son bonheur domestique, et mourut presque subitement, le 12 mars 1820, en se rendant, accompagné de sa femme et de ses trois enfants, d'Edimbourg à Ross Shire.

Malgré les pertes qu'elle avait subies, la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest avait enfin triomphé de ses adversaires. La lutte avait été terrible ; ses postes avaient été pillés et dévastés ; ses exportations considérablement réduites ; mais ces pertes avaient été en partie compensées par les hauts prix obtenus en Angleterre pour les pelleteries. Il fut par conséquent décidé, à la réunion générale des hivernants du mois de juillet 1820, de renouveler, pour dix années additionnelles, l'acte d'association qui aurait, autrement, pris fin en novembre 1822.

Cette décision énergique n'obtint pas, cependant, l'assentiment de tous. Des délégués furent envoyés en Angleterre par quelques dissidents, afin de s'y consulter avec les agents ; et l'on apprit bientôt avec surprise, que ces derniers, qui contrôlaient la majorité des actions, avaient formé avec leur ancien adversaire, la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, une union pour l'exploitation de la traite des territoires du Nord-Ouest pendant vingt-et-un ans !

La Compagnie du Nord-Ouest avait cessé d'exister.

Le trafic de l'Ouest, que les Bourgeois avaient, au prix de tant de sacrifices, attiré vers le Canada, reprit la route de la Baie d'Hudson. Les Bourgeois eux-mêmes se trouvèrent comme perdus, noyés dans la nouvelle organisation devenue "anglaise" ; les fortunes considérables qu'ils avaient accumulées furent bientôt dissipées, et leur influence anéantie : "*The Lords of the lakes and forests had passed away*" !!!

RÉCITS DE VOYAGE
LETTRES ET RAPPORTS INÉDITS
RELATIFS AU
NORD-OUEST CANADIEN

PREMIÈRE SÉRIE

1. L'honorable Roderic McKenzie, "Reminiscences".—Mémoires ; extraits de lettres de Sir Alexander MacKenzie, etc.
2. Lettres de M. W. F. Wentzel, commis de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, à l'honorable R. McKenzie, 1807-1824.—Les départements du Nord.—Expédition de Franklin.
3. M. Simon Fraser, Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest.—"*Journal of a voyage from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Coast*".—Exploration de la rivière Fraser jusqu'à la mer, 1808.
4. M. François Victoire, *alias* Erambert Malhiot, commis de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest.—"*Journal du Fort Kamanaitiquoya à la rivière Montréal*", 1804-1805.
5. M. John McDonnell, Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest.—"*Some account of the Red River*", vers 1797.
6. M. François-Antoine Larocque, commis de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest.—"*The Missouri Journal*", 1804-1805.
7. M. Charles MacKenzie, commis de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest.—"*The Missouri Indians. A narrative of four trading expeditions to the Missouri, 1804, 1805, 1806, for the North-West Company*".

“REMINISCENCES”

BY THE

HONORABLE RODERIC M^CKENZIE

BEING CHIEFLY A

SYNOPSIS OF LETTERS

FROM

SIR ALEXANDER MACKENZIE

REMINISCENCES

On my arrival in Canada, in september 1784, Peter Stuart, 1784. Esq., of Quebec, to whom I had a letter of introduction, advised me strongly to fix my mind on the Indian trade, and that he would recommend me to his friends of Montreal, who were largely concerned in the commerce of the Indian territories.

In the course of the ensuing winter, a new company, lately formed, starting up business, friends of my uncle, viz : Messrs Gregory McLeod & Company agreed to take me into their service, and, in June 1789, I embarked at *Sainte-Anne* for the North West under an engagement of three years.

St. Ann's church was the last church on our route, and the *Voyageurs*, in consequence, generally drop a piece of money into a box there, as an offering, to secure the protection of "*La Bonne Sainte Anne*" during their absence, and I, with a view to do as the people of Rome do, joined my mite to that of the rest of the crew.

The brigade was in charge of a respectable middle aged man named LaLonde, a guide well known among the *voyageurs* of that time. In about two days, our brigade reached the head of the *Long Sault*, in the Ottawa, where the guide had orders to wait for Mr. Gregory who appeared with two gentlemen Mr. Duncan Pollock and Mr. James Finlay. The first has served his time in the Post Office of Quebec, but had lately been engaged in the

trade among the Indians of Michilimakinac and, of course, was understood to be learned in Indian affairs.

Mr. James Finlay was the son of Mr. James Finlay formally of the North West, specially mentioned by Mr. MacKenzie as having made money with which he returned to Montréal and soon became a notable there. The son was brother-in-law to Mr. Gregory, and an accomplished young gentleman of about my age, and on the same footing as me in the service.

Though the country might be called an old country, there was yet no farms nor houses to be seen from the *Long Sault*, near Montréal, to the *Sault Sainte-Marie*, the discharge of Lake Superior, so that we had to perform the journey through a deary wilderness.

lue Sna-
kes.

One evening, happening to encamp on a small island covered with brush wood, we odserve^d a bush of a blueish cast which we found to be caused by a coil of blue snakes. M. Finlay amused himself tickling them with his cutlass, and in a few moments the camp was swarming with them, to my great horror and to that of many others. Mr. Finlay, on the contrary, delighted in running after them, in handling them, and even in putting some within his shirt, and allowing them to crawl around his legs and body without the least fear. These reptiles are harmless, and in some parts of the North West, infest the houses as rats and mice do in Canada, and the people think nothing of it.

At the entrance of the Little River, we overtook a brigade of canoes bound for Michilimakinaw with which we continued to The Vase, where Mr. McCrea, the proprietor, embarked with Mr. Gregory and left the brigade in charge of Mr. Smith, his brother-in-law, a promissing young gentleman who, next day, in crossing Lake Nipisangué, lost his life in a storm with ten of his men, by the swamping of his canoe at cable's length from the shore. Eleven crosses, erected on the adjoining landing, mark their

graves, and the point has in consequence been called since *Pointe des Noyés* (1).

*Pointe des
noyés.*

When this melancholy accident occurred to Mr. McCrea's brigade, he himself was with us at the entrance of Lake Huron. Our guide, perceiving the impending gale, hastened to the shore, and ordered the men to unload. Mr. Gregory, wishing to proceed, desired the guide to continue, but he declined saying in an angry tone : *Allez si vous voulez, sacrédié ! pour moi je n'irai pas ; ne voyez-vous pas le danger ?* and in less than half an hour, our tents were down about our ears and our baggage in a moment deluged in rain.

I did not hear of the Nipisungue misfortune till the year after. Mr. Smith was one of the best swimmers in Montreal. I was told by his intimate friends that he could, with ease, swim from the *quai* of Montreal to the Island of St. Helen's and back again, a distance nearly as large as the Hellespont.

At *La Cloche*, we found an indian lodge, the temporary dwelling of a tall, coarse looking Canadian who had under his care an indian woman, surrounded by several children beside a little one laced to an ornamented board suspended from the arm of a tree. In the lodge, I observed a very long fowling piece, the mounting ornamented with silver instead of brass, which, I was told, belonged to the master, a *Monsieur Constant*, an indian trader then absent. The tall canadian's name, I learned since, was Villeneuve, a native of this place who died here (2), a few days ago, at the age of eighty. He was very indolent, very poor, but very honest ; much of an Indian, which is not to be wondered at, having past the best part of his life among them.

At a point called Tessalon in Lake Huron, Messrs Gregory, McCrea and James Finlay left us for Michilimakinaw, where

(1) To-day, *Pointe aux Croix*, on south shore of Lake Nipissing, at about 10 miles from its outlet.

(2) *Terrebonne*.

the British government intended at one time to build fortifications in lieu of making them at St. Joseph. Mr. Pollock, who had been a long time among the Indians of Michilimakinaw, assumed, as senior, Mr. Gregory's place. His conduct was often very unpleasant at least to me and at length brought on an explanation which placed us on a good footing for the rest of the voyage, if not for ever after.

At The Pic, on Lake Superior, we found Mr. Duncan Cameron from Montreal, *en route* for Nepigon with goods for Mr. Shaw by whom he was employed as clerk. He afterwards became a partner in the North West Company.

At the *Tonnerre* or *Pays Plat* we met Mr. Pangman (1) from the Grand Portage, a proprietor in the concern. He was anxious for our arrival on account of the season, and had come on the look out. He accompanied us to his new establishment, which consisted of one *hangard* or store warmly put together, and sufficiently spacious for the purpose of the season. (2) He and Mr. Ross, another partner, who left Montreal with him early in the Spring, had this building erected after their arrival.

A few days after, Mr. Gregory, Sir Alexander MacKenzie and Mr. James Finlay arrived from their visit to Michilimakinac. Now, all the members of the new concern were assembled at their Head Quarters, viz.: Messrs John Gregory, Peter Pangman, John Ross, A. MacKenzie, partners; Mr. Normand McLeod, being only a dormant partner, remained in Montreal; Messrs Duncan

(1) Mr. Peter Pangman was one of the earliest North-West fur traders after the Cession. He left the North-West Company in 1793 and purchased the seignior of Mascouche where he settled. His son, the Hon. John Pangman, inherited of the seignior, and one of the latter's daughters was married to Mr. Justice Casault of Quebec.

(2) On the North side of Pigeon River, *Rivière aux Tourtes*, and opposite the "old fort" occupied by their opponents.

Pollock and Laurent Leroux, (1) were clerks, M. James Finlay and myself apprentice clerks. The guides, *commis*-men and interpreters were few in number and not of the first quality.

Messrs. Pollock and Leroux did not seem to like doing the ordinary drudgery attending the general *rendez-vous*, and were seldom called upon to do it, so that I, who could yet claim no privilege, necessarily became the fag of the whole ; but I did not grumble, though I often made the *comptoir* my pillow.

However, the busy time did not last long ; the outfits, being not extensive, were soon despatched to their destination, viz : For Athabasca, in charge of Mr. Ross ; English River, Mr. MacKenzie ; *Fort des Prairies*, Mr. Pangman ; Red River, Mr. Pollock. Several other outfits of smaller importance were made out and entrusted to subalterns.

The Grand Portage was given in charge to a Mr. Pierre L'Auniau, who had been for many years in that country, and was so handy that he was considered a "jack of all trades" ; but as he knew *ni "A" ni "B"* I was left with him, I suppose, to supply that deficiency. Eighteen *voyageurs* were placed under his command for erecting the buildings and for the purposes of the *traite*.....

The "old fort" was in charge of Mr. Cloutier, who was a very respectable old man. Mr. Givins, that year from Montreal, was assistant to Mr. Cloutier as I was to Mr. Lanniau. He had been brought up at Detroit, spoke the principal Indian languages as well as the Indians themselves, and was a very pleasant young man. He and I, though in opposition, were always together and separated, in the Spring, good friends. He soon after left

(1) Mr. Laurent Leroux, on his return from the North-West, in 1796, married a Miss Esther Loiselle. He settled at l'Assomption, represented the county of Leinster in 1831 in the Legislative Assembly, and died in 1855, aged 97, leaving a daughter who married Mr. Moïse Raymond in 1815 and who still lives in Montreal.

the country to reside in Upper Canada, where he was appointed Superintendent of Indian affairs and still lives there, greatly advanced in age and enjoying a comfortable pension.

In the Fall, when the Indians were about the place, the young men and I became great friends, which, on their return with their hunt in the spring, they did not forget.

In the Spring, one of the Indians had a difficulty with Mr. Lanniau, whom I had now superseded ; I interposed ; he was turned out of the fort, his knife taken away from him and he was severely hurt in the scuffle. Some days after, when he was more in his senses, he called for his knife, which was given him and he turned to me with an angry look, " When the leaves grow large in the Portage, I will remember you ".

Drinking
match, une
boisson.

That evening the Indians had a drinking match. They were yelling, quarrelling, fighting and making such a dreadful racket, that one might believe that all the Furies of Hell were let loose in the camp, but our gates were of course secured.

In the morning, one of the young men came and informed us that five indians were dead, " One of them I killed, said he, he was your ennemy and meant to kill you on the first opportunity " (1).

During the Spring, the Indians gave a great entertainment to which all the lodges in the camp were invited to partake. I also had an invitation. When all were assembled and seated in the Grand Lodge prepared for the purpose, each guest was served with a small bundle, neatly tied, of *original* dried meat of the best quality ; but my appetite could not do justice to the

(1) The Indians were in the habit of collecting around the forts with their families in the Spring of the year, to barter their furs ; they were, however, never allowed in numbers within the stockades, the doors of which were always closed during the drinking match " *boissons* ", which the traders, at that time, invariably gave on all important occasions. Close competition had rendered the Indians very exacting on that score, and they always refused to do business unless allowed to indulge in those orgies which very often ended in murder.

whole of my *portion*. A friend close by me, observing my embarrassment, asked the rest saying "I shall manage it for you". The *festin* was a *festin* "*à tout manger*".

This spring, the first arrivals after the opening of the navigation 1786. were Mr. Robert Grant and Mr. William McGillivray, who had wintered in the Red River department. These gentlemen were of the opposition and strangers to me, but I called upon them and was well pleased with my reception.

My occupations this summer at Grand Portage were the same as the preceding summer. In due season, I was directed to embark with Mr. A. MacKenzie, one of the proprietors, for his department, the English River. At the entrance of English River, he went ahead and occasionnally left me a line along the route. These lines, I find, are now missing, but his first letter to me is as follows :

" Last Portage, 22 Sept. 1786.

" Dear Roderic,

" I perused the first of yours, per Constantineau, with some uneasiness, but was happy to find that the Indians became calm and hope they will remain so. Should opponents come along side of you, you must do as they do. It is impossible for me to give you any directions ; therefore I leave it entirely to yourself. I met the bearer and his three companions here last night, and gave them some credits and presents, and made them promise to find you and remain with you till the Spring. You will require to give them many presents, as they will often tell you that they will get more at Small's forts. They are much afraid of the Crees, as they think they killed some of their relations this summer, which will be a good pretence to keep them with you.

" If I can spare Lacerte, you may depend upon it, I shall send him to you on the first ice. You may perhaps see *Petit Bœuf*

and several of his people. He is very troublesome at times, so that you must take care of yourself, though he was not so with me; but as he will see you with so few men, he may take advantage of it. If he remains quiet and does not molest other Indians, endeavour to retain him with you, as he is an excellent hunter.

"You never met with so troublesome Indians as the Chippeweans, continually asking things for nothing; but they will not be much displeased at your refusal. I wish you a quiet winter and remain,

"Dear Roderic,

"Your sincere friend,

"ALEX. MACKENZIE."

"To Mr. Roderic McKenzie,

"Where he is to be found.

"I forgot to give the men a dram; give them one for me and give them what advances they may want. The Bearer is a favorite, you must pay him a little more attention than to the others, as he is really attached to us".

Le Joli jeune homme (the Bearer) Dr.

1 blanket	8 skins	
1 blanket	7 "	
1 trench, ice.....	2 "	
1 cotillon.....	7 "	
1 fathom tobacco.....	4 "	
1 Beaver coat Pd & marked....	4 "	
		32 skins.

Accass Dr.

1 axe	3 skins	
1 pr sleeves	3 "	
1 coat, 2½ ells	4 "	
Tobacco	2 "	
1 coat, 1 ell.....	2 "	
		14 "

Watjess

1 pr sleeves	2 skins	
1 cotillon	7 "	
1 Blanket	5 "	
1 coat, 1½ ells.....	3 "	
		————— 17 skins.

Le Boucan

1 pr leggins	3 skins	
1 coat, marked and Pd.....	4 "	—————
		70 (1)

" Dear Roderic,

" I wrote you some time ago pr *Le Joli jeune homme*—which I hope you have received. I arrived here (2) safe on the 24 ult. Found some Indians waiting my arrival to take credits, which I gave them, an acct of which you have enclosed (3)—they waited seven days for me.

" As soon as Bibeau arrived, Mr. Small got two canoes ready which set off next morning ; I suppose they are now alongside of you. I should have despatched the bearer, Lacerte, immediately after them, but he expected his wife from Athabasca, as the fellow is almost mad for her, and I am anxious, having had no news from Mr. Ross.

" I sent off Versailles with four men, my best, seven days ago to the Beaver River ; I expect Versailles will do as well as the famous Lesieur. (4) I remain here with only six men, the lame, the sick, and no interpreters. I sent Leonard yesterday with two

(1) Beaver skins.

(2) *Ile à la Croix*.

(3) In order to economise freight, and to enable the Indians to hunt at a distance, credits were often given payable at another fort.

(4) Mr. Toussaint Lesieur, who, in 1792, established Fort Alexander at the mouth of the Winnipeg River, a few miles below and opposite the old French fort Maurepas.

Indians who took 54 skins credit from me ; as they do not go your way, I do not send you an account of their credits.....

.....

" I believe our Rivals will use no force regarding the Indians ; they told me they did not mean to use any, but would allow the Indians to go where they pleased. I gave them to understand that if they did otherwise, or order their men to take the Indians' property into their forts or houses against their will, I would look to them only for redress, which I am resolved to do. I will not be imposed upon ; trade must be as free to us as to them.

" I spoke to M. McGillivray, he promised he would advise and oblige the Indians, as much as he could, to pay their credits, and I have no doubt, he will do so

" Take care of Cartier, Mr. McGillivray's interpreter, as he is a very keen, insinuating fellow. Keep every thing as secret as you can from your men, otherwise those old *voyageurs* will fish all they wish out of your green hands.

" I hope you will be on a more friendly footing with your neighbours than I am with mine ; we have not spoken together since the canoes left this, which, I believe, is more from indifference than from hatred, as we have had no quarrel "

" It would not be amiss if you could pay the Indians a visit yourself with Constantineau, and endeavour to make their robes and coats, if you cannot go yourself, send Lecerte and Laliberté".

.....

" There are about ten men of the Cree nation at the other fort, all connexions, and I cannot see one of them. I have no one at the fort that can make *raquettes* ; I do not know what to do without those articles. See what it is to have no wives ! Try and get *raquettes*, there is no stirring without them. Send me Constantineau on the first ice, as I find none of my men speak

Cree, and I shall send you another man. My compliments to Mr. McGillivray.

“ Your sincere friend and well wisher,

“ A. MACKENZIE ”.

“ To Mr. Roderic McKenzie,

“ *Lac des Serpents*.

Having been directed by Mr. McKenzie to remain with the ^{Fort Lac au} Indians of *Lac des Serpents* (1), on my arrival there, I fixed on a place for the winter, at their advice. I thought it however advisable to take my time and look about me before I should commence building. In the interval, M. McGillivray appeared well determined for opposition. His order, he said, were to place himself along side of me, but he observed that he did not approve of the situation I had selected, and that he was informed of a much better one not far distant, and suggested it would be for our mutual good if I would accompany him to this place, which I, without hesitation, agreed to, and, in a few hours, we reached our proposed destination, in the vicinity of a small river which promised a plentiful fishery.

Here we pitched our tents within a gun shot of one another. Next day, all hands were set to work, and, in a short time, comfortable lodgings for the winter were completed.

Though the trade was the cause of occasional irritation in the course of the winter, my neighbour and I always kept on speaking terms and maintained a good understanding, and I had the good fortune to secure, as the year before, what were called, excellent returns.

In the Spring, after the trade was over, my neighbour and I, after comparing notes, agreed to travel in company to our respective head-quarters, where our canoes arrived side by side,

(1) Near and below *Ile à la Croix*.

the crews singing in concert. Notwithstanding the surprise the chorus caused, we both were well received at the water side by our respective employers. Mr. McGillivray and I lived on friendly terms ever after (1).....

1787 It being now the beginning of June, 1787, Mr. MacKenzie, finding that the Athabaska canoes retarded too much, felt anxious on account of the lateness of the season, and took his departure for the Grand Portage.

Murder of Mr. Ross. At length the Athabaska brigade made its appearance, and the guide informed us that the delay was caused by the death of Mr. Ross, who had been shot in a scuffle with Mr. Pond's men. This misfortune, I thought, should be communicated to the other partners as soon as possible, and, having no one I could trust, I resolved on going myself, gave charge of my post to Versailles, the interpreter, and embarked on one of the Athabaska canoes.

At the first encampment I had one of the canoes prepared for my voyage, and left the others in charge of the only guide we had. The following morning I embarked with five men who volunteered and depending on my foreman as a guide. He knew little or nothing of the route, which we lost as often as it could be lost, so that it took us one month of hard labour to arrive at our destination.

(1) Mr. William McGillivray became a partner at the reorganization of the North-West Company in 1790, and soon became one of its most influential members.

He was appointed a Legislative Councillor in 1814, in recognition of the services rendered to the country by the Company during the war. The North-West Company was then at the height of its power, and had considerably contributed, with its men and ships, to the taking of Michilimackinac, in July 1812. During the whole war, their well supplied stores were thrown open to the Government for the use of the Indians in the West.

A few years before the coalition of 1821, Mr. McGillivray returned to the Highlands of Scotland where he purchased a property, intending to enjoy in comparative quietness the handsome fortune he had made in Canada; but the hardships he had endured in the North-West had ruined his constitution and he died about 1825.

The cause of our appearance so unexpectedly was soon known through the place, and the Proprietors lost no time in communicating it to our opponents. A meeting of all concerned immediately took place, and it was soon decided to unite the interests of both companies for their common welfare. Coalition
of the rival
companies.

Previous to my arrival with the information, some of the outfits of both parties were already made up and forwarded across the Grand Portage for the interior, and the other outfits were in great progress, so that their contents could not well be received into the general concern before the arrival of the several brigades at their respective destinations.

Mr. Ross being no more, Mr. A. MacKenzie was named for the Athabaska department, where M. Pond, from the unfortunate circumstances of the preceding winter, had remained under a cloud. Mr. Small continued in charge of English River, and I was placed under his command, but authorized, under the new arrangement, to superintend the particular interests of my employers.....

“Rivière Maligne (1), 1 sept. 1787.

“Dear Roderic,

“I wrote you a letter at the entrance of Lake Winnipeg, which I hope you have received. I now enclose you sundry papers which you will peruse with Mr. Thomson. You will advise him to be cautious in every respect where he is going to. Trouble
with H. B.
Co.

“The English (2) are badly inclined. They told me that if I should send any men to the place where *La Grosse Tête* had passed the winter, M. Thomason would go himself at the head of a party, seize upon the goods, take the men prisoners, and send

(1) North of Fort Cumberland, on the route to the Churchill River.

(2) The Hudson Bay Company's servants, to distinguish them from the North-West Company's people who, irrespective of their nationality were “The French.”

all to Hudson Bay, adding, if any resistance was offered, that no mercy should be shown. But Mr. Thomason was not then aware of the coalition of the two companies, and I did not think proper to tell him of it. However Mr. Robert Thomson ought to build a fort this Fall.

"I am surprised you did not take charge of the goods brought out last Spring by *La Grosse Tête* ; I find one half of them have been squandered, and the other half hid in *Lac Bourbon* where they cannot be found.

"I have Cardinal here for Mr. McGillivry, he has promised me to look for the provisions hid by Lacerte in an Island. I could not take my man from the English, he is engaged to them for several years. They are determined to hire as many of our men as they can.

"I am dear Roderic,

"Yours sincerely,

"A. MACKENZIE".

"*Ile à la Crosse*, 1st Oct. 1787.

"Dear Roderic.

"I have yours of the 11th ult. per Constantineau, now before me. The accident of the 14th of Augt. was very unfortunate as it has left me destitute of all necessaries and equipments for inland. Were it not for that accident, I should, by this time, be in the Athabaska Rivér with all the canoes ; now I am afraid that the goods cannot get there this season

"The men who passed the summer here did not respect Versailles and they have done nothing
.....I put your books, all but the History of England, into your *cassette*. I have no necessaries to send you ; you will

pass this winter in the best manner you can ; we must hope for better times ".....

" I remain dear Roderic

" Yours sincerely

" A. MACKENZIE ".

" Remember me to all the men.....

" ATHABASCA, 2 Dec., 1787.

" Dear Roderic,

" I wrote you from *Rivière La Loche*, on the 9th October last. On the 21st, I arrived here in a light canoe, having been obliged to leave the rest of my canoes at *Lac La Loche* ; but I believe there will be plenty of goods here for winter trade. St. Germain arrived too late to send any of the goods in his charge further.

" Mr. McLeod and Mr. Boyer went on foot to the Beaver country for provisions (1). The Indians came with them to this place. We have ordered Mr. Leroux to abandon the Slave Lake and come up with all his men. From what I can learn from the men, none of the goods I sent him from *Ile à la Crosse* remain, and there are scarcely any return in their place. Mr. McLeod has been more successful.".....

" Write me by the first opportunity what you mean to do, whether you mean to remain in the country or not. If you do remain, I make no doubt but you will get as good encouragement as any in the concern
.....If you remain in the country any longer,

(1) Beaver Indians "*Echel tao tima*", *gens des bois forts* : Wentzel. Mr. Henry says they are called "Beaver Indians " because they descend from the Great Beaver, one of their mythological divinities !

you will find it your interest to continue until you obtain some share in the trade.

Results of
competition,

"After the experience you must have of the dreadful effect the late opposition has had upon those who were engaged in it and upon the country, I cannot believe you entertain any thought of a repetition on your own account. Could I, in four years of hard labour and anxiety, pay the debts I owe our concern in consequence, I should feel satisfied. I expect a long letter from you by the return of bearer ; in the mean time".

"I remain your sincere friend

"ALEX. MAC^KENZIE".

Mr. MacKenzie anticipated his visit, having paid it in January, when we had the pleasure of enjoying his company for several days. He and Mr. Small did all in their power to induce me to continue in the service, which I declined. On his way back to Athabasca, he wrote to me as follows from *Lac La Loche* :

"As your resolution is taken I cannot but say something to you regarding our last conversations. Your rejecting the offer made to you, I will not pretend to condemn or approve. If you mean to continue in the country as clerk, though I thought, from some of your expressions at our separation, that you had some other views, perhaps you may settle with the gentlemen at the Portage upon more easy and advantageous terms.

"Whatever you mean to do, weigh matters maturely and consider consequences. It is far more easy for a man to get into troubles than to get out of them. Should you agree to return, I am sorry it cannot be to Athabasca, as you will arrive too late at the Portage.

"I already mentioned to you some of my distant intentions,(1) I beg you will not reveal them to any person, as it might be

(1) His voyage to the Arctic Ocean.

prejudicial to me, though I may never have it in my power to put them in execution. ».....

The following letter, dated *Ile à la Crosse*, by Mr. MacKenzie, 1st February 1788, to the agents of the Company at the Grand Portage, may be of use some time or other, as it gives a true statement of his proceeding to that period.

“Gentlemen,

“I am sorry to inform you that owing to many unforeseen accidents, the goods that were in my charge last Fall did not get in Athabasca. I was stopped, the 2nd October, for five days by the ice within thirty leagues of this place. I was obliged to send back two canoes with sixty three pieces to lighten the others. Then I proceeded with the other canoes, but being frequently obliged to break the ice, we advanced slowly, and got to *Lac La Loche* only the 11th. Early winter.

“The weather at this time was so very severe that I lost all hopes of getting any further, and our provisions were almost exhausted. I therefore had only three canoes and their loading carried by all the men across the Portage; but when they arrived there, which was on the 14th, the ice was taken on the river for two leagues, and the ice driving so thick further on, that there was no possibility of pulling a canoe into it. We could not wait here in expectation of the river getting clear, having no hunters, and I had the goods secured from wild beasts and allowed the men to return to *Lac La Loche* for their winter quarters.

“On the 17th, the weather getting milder, and the ice running not quite so thick, I got eight of my men to embark with me in a light canoe. These men left their own things and we, with great difficulty and risk, arrived at Athabasca the night of the 25th.

"I found that St. Germain arrived there fifteen days before, and, from the unusual severity of the weather, too late to send goods to either the Slave Lake or Peace River countries. Mr. Grant made an attempt with two canoes for the former place without effect. He was stopped by the ice at the entrance of Athabasca Lake, from whence he despatched two men with intelligence to Mr. Leroux.

"Messrs. MacLeod and Boyer went off for the latter place, on the 9th November, with twelve men and nine pieces, in order to trade some provisions for the canoes in their voyage out in the Spring, and to induce the Indians to come to the fort with their hunt in March.

"Two of Mr. Leroux's men arrived from there with letters acknowledging the receipt of Mr. Grant's despatches, which give a very discouraging account of that country. I wrote to Mr. Leroux, with Mr. Pond's concurrence, to come up with his men and bring as many as possible of the Indians along with him.

Trade
prospects.

"It is difficult to say what can be done in time to come in this country, but, as far as can be judged from present appearances, there will be no possibility of establishing a fort there to advantage, nor could the produce come out the same year.

"I am certain, if the Chipewians could be drawn away from there, the other nations would draw near, and if a *rendez-vous* could be established, an advantageous trade would be carried on every summer.

"I cannot well inform you what time—from scarcity of provisions—the canoes with the returns may be expected at *Lac La Phe*; yet it may be about the 20th July.....

"Gentlemen,

"Your most obt and humble servant,

"ALEX. MACKENZIE".

The following from Mr. Small, dated *Ile à la Crosse* 24th Feby 1788, is addressed to Mr. McTavish.

“ Dear Sir,

“ I have written to the New Company concerning all the transactions of this place, and I have likewise written the Old Company a statement of our summer affairs to accompany Mr. Pond’s letters and papers relative to the Slave Lake, to which I beg leave to refer you”.

“ Mr Pond’s letter of the 5th Dec. was some time before Mr. Mr. Pond. MacKenzie left Athabasca. He left it suddenly which was the cause Mr. Pond did not write me by him.

“ I am quite surprised at the wild ideas Mr. Pond has of matters, which Mr. MacKenzie told me were incomprehensibly extravagant. I wrote him, in answer to his of the 3rd Dec., as satisfactorily as I could. I observed to him he could have no reason to think that any thing was even thought of contrary to the mutual interest of all concerned. I put it in his option to go with or after the packs, but represented to him that he required to be expeditious, if he intended returning after seeing the Grand Portage. He is preparing a fine map to lay before the Empress of Russia.....

“ I am, dear Sir, most sincerely yours,

“ PAT. SMALL ”.

“ ATHABASKA, 15 May, 1788.

“ Dear Roderic,

“ I did not expect to write you any more letters from this country, as I supposed you would go out with the first canoes, but I find by Mr. Small’s letter that this is not the case.

“ Your letter of the 31st March I received the 11th instant, and will only trouble you at present with an answer to part of it. You say you were informed I was displeased with you ”
.....Your refusing what I offered by no means displeased me. Circumstanced as I was, I might have offered you less, but I believe I never advised you to accept less or worse terms than the best clerk the Company had.

“ As for your notions of “ slavery ”, I cannot approve of it. It shows you were never acquainted with this abject condition. If you had, for five or six years, been subjected to the caprice of a tyrant or tyranny of a mistress, and, that, for no pecuniary consideration, your ideas of it would be quite different.

“ Mr. Pond is just setting off, therefore I must conclude ; with the same esteem as usual, dear Roderic.

“ Your sincere friend,

“ ALEX. MACKENZIE ”.

“ I won't forget your books ”.

Mr. Pond who was the bearer of the above letter, was the first merchant from Canada who ventured so far as Athabasca and established a trading post there in 1778, just ten years before. Being accused, at different times, of having been instrumental towards the death of two gentlemen who were in opposition to his interest, he was now on his way out of the country on his defence.

About this time, Mr. MacKenzie became extremely anxious and uncertain whether he would leave or remain in the country. However the latter prevailed, and, before the end of July, he was back to *Lac La Pluie* for the arrangement of the Athabaska

affairs there, and insisted upon my accompanying him once more to the interior, which, notwithstanding my high regard for him, I declined.

He then informed me, in confidence, that he had determined on undertaking a voyage of discovery the ensuing Spring by the water communications reported to lead from Slave Lake to the Northern Ocean, adding, that if I could not return and take charge of his department in his absence, he must abandon his intentions. Considering his regret at my refusal, and the great importance of the object he had in view, I, without hesitation, yielded to his wishes, immediately set to work and accompanied him into Athabasca Mr. A. Mac-Kenzie's Artic voyage.

On our arrival at Mr. Pond's old establishment (1), the outfits for the several posts of the Department, were made up and despatched. I was appointed for Athabaska Lake, which was in the neighbourhood, say about one or two day's distance. Mr. MacKenzie himself remained to pass the winter with two or three men at the Old Post, the other men accompanied me to the Lake, where we were to make a new establishment and depend on our own industry in fishing for a living.

On my arrival at our destination, I looked out for a suitable spot for a new establishment to replace the old one of Mr. Pond. After making every possible enquiry and taking every measure of precaution, I pitched on a conspicuous projection that advances about a league into the Lake, the base of which appeared in the shape of a person sitting with her arms extended, the palms forming as if it were a point. Fort Chipewean.

On this point we settled and built a fort which we called Fort Chipewean (2). It is altogether a beautiful, healthy situation, in

(1) At about thirty miles from Lake Athabasca, on Elk River, *Rivière à la Biche*.

(2) Fort Chipewean, for several years the most important in the North, was so called because it was intended more particularly for the trade with that nation. It was, later, found more advantageous to abandon it and to build another on the north shore of the Lake.

the center of many excellent and never failing fisheries, provided they are duly attended to at the proper season.

“ Athabaska, Friday, 21st Nov., 1788.

“ Dear Rory,

“ This is to acknowledge your sundry favors of the 15th and 16th instant per Laverdure and Cantara. They arrived yesterday, about 10 o'clock A.M., and go off to-day at noon. I find, by their account of time, which they say is yours, that we do not agree, this being Saturday. Inclosed you will receive your perpetual almanack, which will put you to right, as I imagine we have lost no time !

“ I am glad to hear you are having such good fishing, and I am told you share in the trouble that attends it. I suppose it is one of your maxims to get acquainted with every thing that is to be done in the country. Fishing at this season is a very cold handed business ; I send you a pair of mittens to keep your fingers warm though I understand you have not yet used any.

“ I remain, dear Roderic,

“ Your's,

“ ALEX. MACKENZIE ”.

Three men and myself, I recollect, visited six nets three times a day from under the ice during that Fall fishery, but no mittens can be used during that serious operation. The fingers and wrists, while occupied in managing the nets and disentangling the fish from the meshes, must be kept constantly immersed to prevent their freezing.

I had a number of *voyageurs* in charge ; they were divided into crews independent of each other and in different houses, each house to provide itself at the fisheries.

About Christmas, Mr. MacKenzie paid us a visit which he extended to the departure of the winter Express in February. In his letter to the Partners at Grand Portage, dated 14th February, he says :

“ I had a very favorable voyage into the country until a short distance from *Ile à la Crosse* when one of the canoes got injured and sunk. By this unfortunate accident I lost two men and eleven pieces of goods. After repairing the damages as well as we could, we continued our voyage and arrived at this department on the 29th September, which was our fifty-second day from *Lac La Pluie* and the shortest voyage, I believe, that has been performed to this quarter with loaded canoes.

“ A great number of Chipewans who went to Hudson’s Bay last summer came this winter to our new establishment at the Lake. They traded largely at the Bay, and were highly satisfied with their reception. They say they had taken seven months to perform their journey ; yet they seemed inclined to return. We gave them large credits which they promised to pay in due time.

“ The men who have remained with the Indians last summer were, and still are, of great injury to the concern by their vicious example and influence.”

In his letter to the Agents of the North-West Company, dated 1789. Athabaska 22nd May, 1789, Mr. A. MacKenzie says :

“ The bearer, Mr. Roderic MacKenzie, goes in a light canoe by *Portage La Loche* a new route that avoids *Portage La Loche*, and, if he finds it practicable, the loaded canoes will pass that way in future. *Portage La Loche* discourages the men, it being $11\frac{1}{2}$ miles long. We measured it last Fall. I expect he will overtake Mr. McGillivray and take a passage with him to the Portage. He will deliver you all the papers regarding this post ; and give you any other information you may wish respecting the trade.

" You will observe by the papers that there are remaining on hand goods more than sufficient for next year. Therefore, it will be needless to send in more canoes than will be required to carry out the returns. Eight, with three of the five that remain inland, will carry more than the country will produce.

" The greatest dependence of this place at present is on the Peace River. The Chippewans are in the habit of trading in Hudson's Bay.

" Mr. Boyer goes out: I could not prevail on him to remain, but he is to return if he can settle his accounts to his satisfaction at Grand Portage. He is a very fit person for the Peace River; Mr. Vandreil is to pass the summer there.

" Mr. Leroux returned on the 22nd March from the north side of Slave Lake where he met with a great number of Red Knives and Slaves who traded with him and to whom he promised a *rendez-vous* in the summer there.

" Mr. Leroux arrived on the 22nd March from the other side of Slave Lake where he had seen a great number of Red Knives and Slave Indians. They traded with him and promised to meet him this summer on the west side of the Lake. I intend to pass that way on my voyage for a supply of provisions ".....

I examined two routes this season in hopes of getting rid of *Portage La Loche*. In going out, I went by Little Fish River below *Portage La Loche* and found this route would not answer. However it answered the purpose of a trading establishment.

Going in, I went from *Isle à la Crosse* by *Lac Clair* to the head of the Athabasca River, which I found to be one continued chain of falls and rapids roaring among rocks and precipices entirely unfit for the purpose of navigation, so that we had the greatest difficulty with our canoe to find our way through to the landing place of *Portage La Loche*.

When I left Fort Chipewean for Grand Portage, Mr. MacKenzie was preparing for his first voyage of discovery; on my return, in the beginning of September, I found him at the Forks of the Athabasca River, where he had endeavoured to meet me, which was, as Mr. Small observes, a very joyful meeting, not having heard of him since our separation in the Spring.

He performed his perilous undertaking to the Arctic Ocean without experiencing any material accident, in about one hundred days. After his return from his discovery, he remained at Fort Chippewean where he passed the ensuing winter and kept me with him.....

Letter from Mr. Shaw, dated *Lac d'Orignal* (1), 16th Dec., 1789.

“ My dear Rory,

“ On the 7th of October, I arrived at the entrance of *Rivière* Mr. Shaw establishes Lac d'Orignal Fort. *Orignal* and would you believe it, that although it was only five leagues, it took me nine days to transport the goods in it. There are thirty-six rapids in it with very little water. Had there been a possibility of carrying by land the whole length, I would have preferred it, but both sides of the river were entire swamps, &c.

“ I brought the goods, however, to a large point on the south-east of the lake and wrought two or three days at felling trees for my house, but, to my great mortification, we then discovered there was no clay to be found within five leagues of us.

“ There was no alternative short of a removal to another and more favorable situation at the entrance of a small river on the

(1) The *Lac d'Orignal* Fort is about 200 miles to the west of Edmonton, at the source of the Fraser River. See official map of 1857 prepared by order of the Hon. Mr. Cauchon.

west side of the lake, where I immediately commenced building and had all finished by the 1st November; afterwards got plenty of fish secured to the month of March.

" I discovered four Hudson's Bay men with a band of Assiniboines; I prevailed on the Indians to send them back home. Simon Réaume lost his way going with letters to *Fort des Prairies*. He returned yesterday from there and brought me letters from Montreal, from Grand Portage and from *Fort des Prairies*.

" As for any news I can give you, more likely you know them already. However, I must inform you, beaver has raised considerably in value; *Bon!* Lesieur and Simon Fraser have taken the post of *Rivière des Trembles* and *Portage de l'Île*. They are in partnership. I wish them much joy of their bargain. B... has lost one year's wages for grog drinking. J. Bte. R.....and B.... are both gone to Montreal in irons for theft.

" David Grant would not accept of £100, for which reason our friend Cuthbert was sent in his place. Peter Grant and Desmarais have been sent with a couple of canoes to *Lac Rouge*. Thornburn was left by Mr. Montour at Finlay's old fort *Rivière au Pas*, with two canoes, and some *Sauteux* are with them.

" My friend Thomason is gone to England, and Mr. Halket has taken his place at Pine Island. Alexander Fraser was sent to winter at *Côte des Serpents* and Tourangeau winters at *Lac Vert*. Belleau is engaged for three years, and is now with his friend, Mr. Bergeron, with all his goods. Nothing but ups and downs!

" Both Mr. Montour and Mr. Bergeron inform me that they are ill off for want of provisions; for my part the fish does not agree with me; two and a half fresh beavers is all the fresh meat I have received since I came here, these I killed myself.

The country.

" Perhaps you would wish to know what kind of a country this is. I may say it is entirely composed of mountains, small lakes and small rivers in which there is the greatest quantity of

beavers, martens, &c. The martens are very fine. I have already caught several, but the rascally wolves play the devil with my traps.

"The Plains are about two days and a half march off and *Fort des Prairies* (1) is about eight days distance to the south-east. My house is small but very warm. I must put up with it.".....

"You will, in the next place, wish probably to know how I <sup>A winter-
er's life.</sup> spend my time; but stop till I smoke my pipe! I rise with the sun and, after *debarbouillant mon visage*, I take a walk to my traps, return to the house, eat *Tollibees* (2) about nine; then take another walk or work all day at something or other. About 7 p.m., I again eat *tollibee* boiled or roasted and pass the rest of the evening in reading or writing. When Indians are about the house I, of course, attend to the interests of my employers.

"Indeed, my dear man, I find time very long, which I fear may affect my constitution; but there is no help to it. I have worked at beaver lodges, killed a few beavers. I make *traines*, bend snow-shoe frames, and, with perseverance, I'll perhaps learn to handle the *couteau croche*. I was very unfortunate in respect to my nets, four out of seven were entirely rotten. I have made one, seventy-five fathoms long, but the season once passed could not be recalled.

"Please remember me to all the gentlemen I have named, likewise to Mr. Leroux and Mr. Vandreil and to any others who may enquire if Shaw lives.

"Now, my dear Rory, everything has an end, so must this

(1) Edmonton. The French had a fort called *Fort des Prairies*, on the Saskatchewan, below Fort Nipawi.

(2) A species of white fish of the salmon family.

letter, which I conclude by assuring you that I am with the greatest esteem, dear Rory,

“ Your affectionate friend,

“ and very humble servant,

“ ANGUS SHAW ”.

In the Spring, Mr. MacKenzie set out for the Grand Portage. On his way he wrote me among other letters, the following :

.....

“ *Pointe aux Tourtes*, 1st July, 1790.

“ Dear Roderic,

“ My last to you was from the *Opas* (1) which I hope you have received ere now. As we expected, but few provisions here ; only 72 bags for 27 canoes. I do not know what quantity the English River canoes may take ; at any rate I think they must have a sufficiency for your's and Leroux's. You will only embark the quantity necessary for your canoe to *Lac La Pluie*.

“ We found a very severe letter here from Mr. McTavish, respecting the Athabasca packs of last year, which were received in bad order partly owing, he says, to St. Germain and partly to us having left them without a proper person to conduct them, and desires that precautions should be taken against recurrence.

“ News ! the returns throughout are excellent. Mr. C. Grant made 120 packs and 8 kegs castoreum ; Messrs. Fraser and Lesieur 30 packs ; Bissonette, 53 packs and 3 kegs castoreum ; Mr. R. Grant, 308 packs, 8 kegs castoreum ; St. Germain, at *Lac La Pluie*, 40 packs ;—he is very sick ;—Peter Grant, 26 packs : La Tour, 8 packs.

(1) Near the mouth of Carrot River, on the Saskatchewan or *Rivière du Pas*.

" Mr. Montour is 8 days ahead of us, ten men in his canoe. I have not been able to get one good observation in all Lake Winnipeg ; I hope Mr. Vandreil will be more successful. My compliments to him, St. Germain and the men, and believe me to be as usual,

" Your most sincerely,

" ALEX. MACKENZIE".

" Grand Portage, 16th July 1790.

" Dear Rory,

" We arrived here on the 13th inst. all quite well; plenty of letters for others but none for me, except a few lines from Mr Robertson and one from Mr. McLeod, but not a word from my uncle

" Mr. McTavish is now at the other side sending off canoes ...

" I have not as yet said any thing to Mr. Gregory. Mr. Pangman, I find, pays the two shares.....I do not know what I may do. My expedition was hardly spoken of, but that is what I expected. Shaw returns to his post independent of *Isle à la Crosse*. We take in part of his goods. My compliment, to Mr. Vandreil and Leroux. Nothing more but that I am

Mr Mac-Kenzie's expedition ignored.

" Yours sincerely,

" ALEX. MACKENZIE".

" Fort Chipewean, 2 March 1791.

" Dear Roderic,

" I was agreeably surprised by the arrival of Martin on the 13th ult., but the perusal of your despatches cast a damp on my

spirits, but maturer consideration made me hope that this impending storm may, by some means, be warded off, though perhaps not without great difficulties.....

"It will be proper to appoint a chief among the Red Knives. I think the English Chief may answer, as none of their own principal men can have sufficient authority. Leaving the returns there, is a thing I cannot think of, the lake will not be clear of ice before the middle of June.

"The answer you are to give the Indians regarding the continuance of this Fort (1) must depend on your present success. It occurs to me now that we will have to establish a Post on this side of the Lake, at the entrance of the Slave River, as near as possible to the fishery discovered last Spring. You will therefore examine the place *en passant*.

"The Red Knives can have no weighty objection to this; the Slaves deal only in martens. Should they not like the distance, they can make use of the Red Knives as *Carriers*.

River Dis-
appoint-
ment,

"To accommodate the newly discovered, or Beaver Indians, I would propose to send men on a large canoe on a trading voyage down the River Disappointment, (2) where they might give a *rendez-vous*; this you may propose to them.

"I find by your journal, that you have purchased some curiosities; I wish you will miss nothing in that way, as you know, I am destitute of those articles. It would be unbecoming a North-Wester to appear below so unprovided in that line. Keep for me one of the small musk buffalo horns in its natural state. I think the skin of the buffalo will look curious. Try and procure a fawn robe or two.

(1) Slave Lake Fort.

(2) The Grand River, or MacKenzie River.

"I hope you will make all possible enquiry regarding the country of the Beaver Indians as well as of the country of the Slaves, and more particularly regarding a great river (1) which is reported to run parallel with, and falls into the sea to the westward of the River in which I voyaged, and commit such information to paper.".....

" *Grande Pointe*, 18 May 1791.

" Dear Roderic,

"I am sorry it happens to be your turn to remain in land when it is mine to go to Canada, as I think an hour's conversation preferable to ten letters, but those things cannot be helped.

" Endeavour to see the house put in proper order before the arrival of the English, who, if there is room, will lodge at the Fort. The men beg that you will allow their women to remain in their present quarters within the fort.....

Mr. Turner's expedition

" Your's very sincerely,

" ALEX. MACKENZIE".

" Entrance of *Lac des Bœufs*, 1st June 1791.

" Dear Roderic,

" I met Mr. Turner here this morning. I find the intention of the expedition is discoveries only. I also find the party ill prepared for the undertaking. Mr Ross wishes to obtain storage from you for some baggage, should the expedition proceed fur-

(1) The Yucon or Pelly River.

ther than your place, where, they say, they intend to pass the winter. They have several Indians with them who owe credits to Mr. Small. I enclose you Mr. Small's letter which contains all the news I have from that quarter.

" I am, dear Roderic,

" Your's, most sincerely,

" ALEX. MACKENZIE "

" *Lac La Pluie*, 2 Augt. 1791.

" Dear Roderic,

" I write you a hasty letter on business, but which, I hope, will be sufficient ".....

" I shall now give you a short account of affairs as they stand at present in the country. You must know that the Concern was continued last year for seven years after the expiration of this.

" We were all bound upon honor not to make it public before a future period that might be agreed upon. I shall make no other apology for keeping it from you. The conditions are as follows: 20 shares, of which:

Messrs. McTavish, Frobisher & Co.....	6 shares.
Mr. Montour.....	2 "
Mr. Grant	2 "
Mr. Small.....	2 "
Mr. Gregory.....	2 "
Mr. Pangman.....	2 "
Mr. McGillivray (Mr. McGillivray paid Mr. Pond £800 for his share.).....	1 "
Mr. Sutherland	1 "
Myself	2 "

for one of which I pay to Mr. McBeath £350 Halifax currency, Value of
over and above the stock on hand. Mr. Gregory and Mr. Pangman shares of
are obliged to purchase theirs from Mr. Holmes and Mr. McLeod. N. W. Co.
The latter disposed of his for £200 per annum for, I suppose, 1796.
three or four years ; the former is not settled with. Sutherland
gets his share out of Messrs. McTavish, Frobisher & Co through
the latter's interest. The goods, to be imported on account of
the Concern, paying the house below 5 per Cent. at the foot of
the invoice ; the rest of the expenses as usual, &c."

" Fort Vauligny, 10 Augt., 1791.

" Dear Roderic,

.....
" This is going off very late for *Ile à la Crosse* ; indeed, I find
every thing late for the season, and am very fearful many of the
canoes may not reach their winter quarters *sans misère* ; several
may be stopped by the ice, which I sincerely wish may not be
the case with *Athabasca*.

" Mr. McLeod was so much hurt at his uncle's conduct (1) that I Salaries.
could not make him any proposal for continuing in the country,
but I write to him that if he finds it to his interest to continue
for three years more, he will be allowed £200 per annum. This
allowance is confined to very few, and I think he will look upon
it as a very genteel salary I look upon it more for the benefit
of the Company that he should remain in land.

" Messrs. Lesieur and Fraser have continued their agreement
with the company for five years longer with this additional
advantage, that when the profits do not come up to £200, the
Company engage to supply the deficiency for them. Mr. St.
Germain has taken *Rivière à la Biche* on the same terms.

(1) Who, probably, did not secure him a share as partner in his place, on retiring.

" Lesieur goes to Canada this year for the benefit of his health. Frédéric, whom you saw at the Portage, goes in for him. Lafrance retires with 12,000 fr. Mr. Leroux is hired for five years at £100 Mr. Thomson also, and I think Cuthbert Grant, is on the condition I offered Mr. McLeod. Mr. Thorburn is for three years; so you see the North is well fixed for some time to come.

" Messrs. McTavish and Small left the other side some time before my arrival from *Lac La Pluie*, for which I am very sorry, because I am afraid I shall not be able to see the former in Canada. He left me a very kind note expressing a desire that I should make Mr. Frobisher's my home while at Montreal.

" I have some idea of crossing the Ocean but this I cannot determine at present. However it is my fixed determination, if I live and be in health, to meet you next Spring at *Lac La Pluie*. Though my absence be thus short, I can assure you that I leave my friends in this country with much pain.

" Give my compliments to Mr. Turner, the English astronomer, and tell him I am sorry I cannot have the pleasure of his company this winter.....

" Forks Peace River, 10 January 1793.

" Dear Roderic,

Mr. A.
MacKenzie
prepares
for his
overland
voyage.

" I did not intend to write you before the return of the express, which I am impatient to see arrive.....

" I forgot at the Lake the account taken of the goods last Fall, also Atkinson's epitome of Navigation with——— Chemistry, 2 vols., and send me the sextant (1) with all the quick silver you have, as I have lost all mine.

" I have been so occupied with the company's affairs, that I have not been able to do anything for myself. I worked once

(1) Sir A. MacKenzie's sextant and chronometer are still preserved in the family at Terrebonne.

the distance between the Sun and the Moon for the longitude which gave $115^{\circ} 25'$. The situation is so inconvenient, that I have not as yet been able to observe the eclipse of Jupiter's satellistes; the latitude is $56^{\circ} 34' 30''$.

"I have not been able to obtain any certain information, thus far, respecting the country behind this.

"I was thinking that if McKay could be spared, he would be of great service to me should I undertake my expedition, but then, I do not see any person to undertake the opening of a route by *Lac des Carriboux*; I would take Finlay, but he is of a weak constitution.

"Wishing you health and happiness and tranquility of mind I remain,

"Dear Roderic, &c.,

"ALEX. MACKENZIE".

This letter is much abridged.

"Forks Peace River, 8th May, 1793.

"Dear Rory,

"I have been so vexed and disturbed of late, that I cannot sit down to any thing steadily. The Indians in general have disappointed me in their hunt. I have had great trouble to procure young men to accompany me in my expedition; none of them like it. I at last prevailed on three; a fourth was desirous to go, but I would not take him, and, to be revenged, he induced my guide to run away, and both have disappeared last evening. His troubles and anxiety.

"The two remaining Indians know no more of the country than I do myself, and it may be that they are on the eve of following the example of the others, for no dependence can be put on the promises of any of these people; without Indians I have little hopes of success.

"The guide who deserted was acquainted with another large river to the westward of this, at the distance of two days' march, but the difficulty is to find that river out. At any rate we are too far advanced in the undertaking not to make the attempt.

"In such a state of mind, you may judge if the few letters I have written can be very correct. I send them all open to you, with my seal to close them after perusal. I have only taken copy of Mr. McGillivray's for scarcity of paper. If you could, I wish you would take a copy of those to the agents, to Sutherland, Pangman, Small and Shaw; Pangman's in particular..... (1)

"Without commenting on what you say about Daniel, I shall only mention that I agree with you. I wish him to undertake the discovery of the route by *Lac des Carriboux* to *Fort La Traite* with such means as you can spare. It will be more advantageous than remaining at the Lake, where there will be very little to do, particularly if the Crees remain.

"The orders necessary for the Slave country you will have to give, as I shall say nothing to Mr. Livingston on business. I hope, if I live, to be at Athabaska before the second trip from that country, should they make two trips.

"I never was so undecided in my intentions as this year regarding my going to the Portage or remaining in land. I weighed everything in my mind over and over again, and cannot find that my opponents there can do me any injury, without running the risk of impairing their own interest, therefore I ought to fear nothing on that score. But I am greatly in doubt regarding my affairs with Pangman; several points in our agreement may be defective which ought to be corrected, and which I authorise you to see done.".....

(1) One or two pages explaining that it was no fault of his if Mr. Archibald Norman McLeod did not succeed his uncle as partner at the arrangement of 1790.

"With this weight on my mind, and my desire to mix in the business at Grand Portage, I would not have remained in land had I any intention of continuing in the country beyond the ensuing winter. ^{His dislike of the country.}

"Should I be successful, I shall retire with great advantage; if not, I cannot be worse off than I am at present. I begin to think it is the height of folly in a man to reside in a country of this kind, deprived of every comfort that can render life agreeable, especially when he has a competency to enjoy life in a civilized society, which ought to be the case with me.

"If I can judge Mr. Grant by myself, he will certainly retire this year. Should he pass his turn, he must wait until the next rotation. If his share be given up, Mr. McLeod, with Mr. Fraser will come in. You will observe what I say to Shaw and McGillivray on this subject, which, I hope, will meet your approbation and that you will vote for us both accordingly.....

"9th May. All is ready now for Delorme's departure; he may overtake the other canoes on the way. I intend to leave this in the afternoon; to-morrow will be Friday.

"I made a mistake in calculating the latitude of this place by using miles in lieu of degrees for the refraction. The latitude is $56^{\circ} 9'$; I have not corrected my observations for the long: but find by the eclipses of Jupiter's satellites, that it is $117^{\circ} 43'$ west. This place is very unfavorable for night observations being frequently cloudy, and unfortunately it happened to be so in the course of the last eclipse.

"Remember me kindly to those of our friends I do not write to, and plead my excuse. I send you a couple of guineas, the rest I take with me to traffic with the Russians. Alex. MacKay (1) desires his compliments to you; I keep him so hard

(1) Mr. Alexander MacKay left the service of the North-West Company in 1810. He joined Mr. Jacob Astor's Company as partner, and was murdered with the rest of the crew of the "Tonquin" by the Indians of the Pacific Coast; see: Franchère.

at work that he has no time to write you. May all happiness attend you ! Adieu !

“ Dear Roderic,

“ Yours unchangeably,

“ ALEX. MACKENZIE ”.

The following is an extract of a long letter dated Fort Chipewen 13th January 1794.....

“ I wish we could contrive matters so that we could both go to the Portage. The *Premier* (1) having arrived from England we may expect him at the Grand Portage, where it will be right that all the interested should meet him.

“ I am fully bent upon going down, for I think it unpardonable for any body to remain in this country who can leave it. What a pretty situation I am in this winter, starving and alone, without the power of doing myself or any body else any good ! The boy at *Lac La Loche*, or even my own servant, is equal to the performance of my winter occupation, and the profits, I am afraid, will be so small during the war, that it will not be worth any man's while to remain in it”.

“ Fort Chipewean, 5 March.

“ Dear Roderic,

his Jour- “ It is now the season I promised to write to you, and would
nal. wish I could fulfill another promise I made you last Fall and this winter. I need not tell you I mean “ my Journal.” But be assured it is as great a disappointment to me as to yourself, for

(1) Mr. Simon McTavish was very much disliked by the majority of the wintering partners who, on account of his haughty demeanor, called him “ The Premier ” “ The Marquis.”

I wished that you should peruse it at your leisure before any other person, as I expected you would examine the calculations and correct the diction with that freedom which one friend might expect from another.

“ Last Fall, I was to begin copying it, but the greatest part of my time was engaged in vain speculation. I took such a habit of thinking so long on a subject, that I sometimes walked backward and forward, musing for hours, at the end of which I could not tell what it was about.

“ Did I sit down to write, I was sure that the very things I ought not to have been thinking of would occur to me instead of what I had to do. This one calling me to the garret, another to the cellar, and others to the shop, kept me so busy doing nothing, that all I could do till the time I wrote you, was to look over the men’s accounts. In short, my mind was never at ease, nor could I bend it to my wishes.

“ Though I am not superstitious, my dreams caused me much annoyance. I could scarcely close my eyes without finding myself in company with the dead. I had visions of late which almost convince me that I have lost a near relation or a friend.

“ It was the latter end of January when I began my work, thinking then that I had sufficient time, though the reverse is the case, and I will be satisfied, and so must you, if I can finish the copy for your perusal in the Spring. It is a work, I find, that requires much more time than I was aware of, for it is not at this moment a quarter finished ”.....
..... (1)

Mr. McKenzie did not, after this period, return to winter but became one of the agents or directors of the Company, in which capacity he attended yearly the business of the Concern at Grand Portage. He left that year for England and returned during the summer of 1795.

(1) The rest, relating to Mr. Finlay’s affairs.

On the 25th October, 1797, he wrote me to inform me of the formation of a concern against the North-West Co. by Messrs. Forsyth, Richardson & Co. and others.....

The old
Caministiquia route
reopened.

After a long absence in the Indian territories, I paid this year a visit to Canada. Returning the following Spring, on my first trip from Grand Portage to *Lac La Pluie*, I met a family of Indians at the height of land from whom I accidentally learned the existence of a water communication a little way behind and parallel to this, extending from Lake Superior to Lake *La Pluie*, which is navigable for large canoes and, if adopted, would avoid the Grand Portage.

This was excellent information; of course I immediately engaged one of the Indians to meet me at a certain point in *Lac La Croix*, to show me this new route, but on my arrival, as appointed, the Indian was not there. However, being acquainted with the entrance of the route, I proceeded without him and reached a post of the Company where I procured a guide who accompanied me to Caministiquia on Lake Superior, from whence I soon reached Grand Portage, being the first who reached there from *Lac La Pluie* direct by water communication.

This apparently new route, being at the door of Grand Portage, and formerly used by the French, it is most astonishing that the North-West Company were not acquainted with it sooner.

It may be right to observe here that, after the peace of 1783, the Commissioners appointed by the British and American Governments for settling the boundaries, decided that the Grand Portage was within the limits of American territories.

In 1784, at the establishment of the North-West Company, the Directors, in consequence of the decision of the Commissioners, despatched an expedition to survey a water communication said to exist between *Pays Plat*, in Lake Superior through Nipigon to *Portage de l'Isle* in River Winipic, which, after two months of hard labour, was reported impracticable, so that the North-West

Company were left awkwardly situated, without one opening for their trade, until the present discovery (1).

In the History of Canada, repeated mention is made of the establishment of Caministiquia, and it appears by vestiges and report that the French establishments were destroyed by fire. In the river of Caministiquia, at a short distance above the fort, there is a fall which, in my opinion, is little inferior in splendor to the Falls of Niagara.

In consequence of this discovery, measures were adopted for the removal of the establishment of Grand Portage to Caministiquia, and in 1801, the necessary preparations having been made, Caministiquia became the head quarters of the North-West Company for ever after.

“ Montreal, 22nd June 1799.

“ Dear Sir,

“ I have to acknowledge the receipt of your favors of the 28th last July and 7th August, in the perusal of which I found much satisfaction and information, and sincerely wish every one of the Gentlemen who manage the Company's concerns in the country would take the same pains.

“ Your observations on the proposed road by Lake *Du Chien* convince me, beyond a doubt, that it would be more advantageous and easy for us than the Grand Portage, and if our application for a grant to the Company succeeds, which I hope it will, I think no time should be lost in moving our place of *rendez-vous*.

“ The threatened opposition have, this year, made a serious attack to us, and I fear that a coalition of interests between the parties opposed to us may render them more formidable, but I still hope the additional resources which the Company will draw from the new discoveries in your department, and by pushing the business by *Fond du Lac*, will compensate us for some years

(1) The exploration made by Mr. Umfreville. See: *Esquisse historique*, page 24.

to come for any thing the new adventurers to the North-West may clip from our wings. The sales are this year good, and I have great hopes they will continue to be so.

● "From Hallowell's report of the China trade, we know that there is a vent that way for a considerable quantity which, taken out of the London market, will enhance the value of the remainder. Peace cannot be far distant; when it comes, our expenses will be considerably diminished, and if in a few years the Houses in opposition to us get tired of their undertaking, the business may be as good as at any time heretofore. We have enclosed to the agents all the catalogues of sales and every information we could collect for the satisfaction of the gentlemen at the Portage, of which you will no doubt have full communication made to you.....

"I remain, with regard,

"My dear sir,

"Yours sincerely,

"SIMON MCTAVISH".

Mr. Mac-
Kenzie
leaves the
N. W. Co.

This year, the engagement of Mr. MacKenzie with the Company expired, and, by some misunderstanding existing between him and his Montreal associates, it was not renewed. He announced at the first general meeting of Partners at the Grand Portage that, feeling himself uncomfortable, he could not think of renewing his engagements and was determined to withdraw from the Concern.

This brought on a serious discussion, and it was resolved unanimously by the wintering partners that Mr. MacKenzie, having their sole confidence, they could not dispense with his services, therefore that every means should be adopted to retain him, but, unfortunately, the best endeavours of his friends were of no avail, for he retired in November and crossed the Atlantic.

The absence of Mr. MacKenzie from the Concern created a vacancy, and as he had gone to England and probably had entered into other engagements, application was made to me to supply his place which I accepted though with great reluctance.
 (1)

“ London, 21 January 1800.

“ Dear Roderic,

“ I wrote you by New York 12th and 27th Dec. and 17th inst. and this is to go by the Packet carrying the January mails under sailing orders for the 25th ”.

This letter continues the same subject as the last. It was impossible for me to join in any hostile measure against the North-West Concern, happening to be a regular partner in them under engagements made by the writer himself, whereas he was free from all these engagements, having not subscribed to them.....

Another letter, dated Montreal, 14th June, begins abruptly under an impression of heavy displeasure, and it appears to be the last to the period after our first separation.

We may here mention that, in 1801, Mr. A. MacKenzie published in England his discoveries dedicated to the King, who conferred the honor of knighthood upon him, and he appeared in powerful opposition to us under the firm of Alexander MacKenzie & Co. He soon became a member of Parliament for the county of Huntingdon, and, during his attendance in Quebec, renewed his correspondence with me (2)

(1) Then follow several letters to Mr. R. MacKenzie, written : one on board the ship *Desire* on his way to England, the others from England, and relating to his personal affairs. In one of the latter, he speaks of a Miss McDonald, a charming woman who was married to his friend, Mr. McGillivray, and of a Mrs. McKenzie, of Three Rivers.

(2) After the death of Mr. Simon McTavish and the union of the two Companies in 1804.

“ Quebec, 24 Jan., 1805.

“ Dear Sir,

Apprecia-
tion of
Quebec.

“ Your favors of the 17th and 21st, I have to acknowledge. Owing to the stormy weather the Post did not come at hand Monday. The people here say they do not remember such a continuance of rough weather.

“ As I keep no copies, I forget how I expressed myself to have given you the idea that I had made a good exchange by coming here.

“ The society is certainly very agreeable, and I feel myself much obliged by the attentions I universally receive, and this the stronger as it is from strangers, persons with whom I am but slightly acquainted.

“ I am heartily tired of legislation. I sincerely wish that those who thought themselves my friends in being the means of getting me so honorable a situation, had been otherwise employed.

“ Very little good is done as yet. They will allow us a jail at the expense of our district, by assessment upon property. No tax will go down with them except upon commerce, which they will have no objection to extend to any amount. For example: it is proposed as a means of building jails to tax the men of the North-West Company: say 1500 winterers at six pounds, and summer men, same number, at three pounds; a duty upon furs and peltries that would amount to £15,000.

“ Yours, &c.,

“ ALEX. MACKENZIE ”.

“ To Roderic McKenzie, Esq.

“ Pallas, Frigate, 3 Nov., 1805.

“ My dear Sir,

“ Although I have not any thing worth troubling you with, I cannot let slip this last opportunity that offers of addressing you on this side of the Atlantic.....

" I see you are anticipating that, let next winter be as it may, you will retire into the bosom of your family. Never mind the folly of the times; for my own part I am determind to make myself as comfortable as circumstances will allow. I have a large field before me. I do not leave Canada without regret.....

" Yours, &c.,

" ALEX. MACKENZIE ".

" N. B.—I feel quite comfortable with Lord Cockran, and I look forward to a pleasant passage. You would be well with him, for every moment he can spare from the business of the day is devoted to books, of which he has a choice collection."...

" London, 7th November, 1806.

" My dear Sir,

" Upon my return from Scotland nothing afforded me so much pleasure as your kind favor from Caministiquia of the 26th July ult. which I found here. The subject of it is most interesting and satisfactory. I understand the result of the returns from all quarters is estimated at from £130,000 to £140,000, which must leave a very handsome profit upon the outfit of the year, and no doubt the proposed extensions and exertions will in future increase the profits considerably.....

" When I wrote you respecting the publication of the second edition of my voyages, I had not the most distant idea that it was the intention of the Company to give the History of the North-West, and now, instead of asking your assistance, I offer you mine, as you are the person that seems to take the lead.

Mr. R.
McKenzie's
History of
the North-
West Co.

"I must, however, take the liberty of reminding you, that the difficulties you have already experienced are trivial in comparison to those you have still to encounter before you get through your undertaking. Your object must be to relate matters as they occurred, which may make more enemies than friends. Besides you will have to advance at least two thousand pounds before you receive a shilling for the work (1).

"I wish you would give instruction to collect from the English Chief and other Chipewheans the fullest account they possibly can give of Hearne's journey with them to the North Sea, where, according to what I learn, he never went."

.....

"London, 13th April, 1812.

In which after referring to the Earl of Selkirk's conduct to himself, Sir Alexander MacKenzie says:

Lord
Selkirk.

"I have finally settled with that Lord. After having prepared a bill to carry him before the Lord Chancellor, it was proposed to my solicitor by the solicitor of His Lordship that one-third of

(1) The Hon. R. McKenzie was a man of considerable literary attainments and very extensive reading. He appears to have at one time entertained the idea of publishing a History of the Aboriginal tribes of the North-West, as well as a History of the North-West Company. In order to procure the necessary materials for that work, he sent printed circulars to many of the wintering partners, and clerks of the North-West Company, requesting them to collect, and send to him in the form of letters or journals, such information as they could obtain relating to the country in which they were respectively stationed; the natives, their origin, religion, morals and customs; their most eminent chiefs, their government; the origin of their trade with the White, &c.

He received, in response, several reports, "accounts," and journals from the North-West,—some of which are published in this collection—but he does not appear to have carried out his original plan, but seems to have been content with collecting a vast number of most interesting extracts from the books of different travellers and writers, and arranging them so as to prove, and establish a perfect analogy of race between the Aborigines, of the North-West and other nations, ancient and modern, throughout the world, by the similarity of their ideas, customs and modes of living.

the stock that was purchased on joint account before I went to America, amounting to £4,700, and the balance of cash in his Lordship's hands, belonging to me, should be given up to me ; of this I accepted, though I might have obliged his Lordship to make over to me one-third of the whole purchase made by him in this stock, which, at one time, I was determined to do, having been encouraged thereto by the House of Suffolk Lane and countenanced by that of Mark Lane (1). But these Houses thought it prudent to desist from any further purchases."

Then Sir Alexander states that by a verbal understanding with Mr. McGillivray, his purchase of the Hudson's Bay stock belonged to the North-West Company, and that, if Mr. McGillivray himself had been there, a sum of thirty thousand pounds might have been invested in that stock ; " all which Lord Selkirk purchased, and if he persists in his present scheme, it will be the dearest he yet made.

" He will put the North-West Company to a greater expense than you seem to apprehend, and, had the Company sacrificed £20,000, which might have secured a preponderance in the stock of Hudson-Bay Co., it would have been money well spent."

Sir Alexander then speaks of his marriage with Miss MacKenzie, of C..... (2) and his purchase of the estate of Avock.

" Avock, 14th January, 1819.

" My dear Sir,

" When I look at the date of your letter—nearly two years old—I am quite ashamed of myself.....

(1) The North-West Company's Agents in London.

(2) Illegible.

"Occurrences with Lord Selkirk and the Hudson's Bay Company are so various and numerous that it would require a volume to detail and comment upon them; most of the prominent events I learn from the public prints.

"Upon the whole they have not turned out so disastrous to the North-West Company as might naturally have been apprehended. The losses sustained in the country, though severe and serious, have been, in a considerable degree, compensated by the high prices obtained for the furs, the sales of which were certainly managed with great judgment in London.

"The returns from all quarters, I should suppose, would have brought £50,000 more than they were estimated; similar prices, I understand, were expected this year, and it is said the returns are good. This, with the affairs of the interior reduced to their usual state, is a cheering prospect.

"The North-West agreement is now drawing to a close, I should not be surprised to see a serious change take place in the direction of its affairs. To me this can be of no consequence, as I think it would be unjust, as well as impolitic, to continue me, or any other person, upon the establishment as Dormant Partners. I shall be most happy however to see the business continued and carried on with vigour

"They will have a large amount to account to me; the present agents do not seem disposed to reduce it, as they have not paid me a shilling of principal or interest since I became a partner under the firm of "Sir Alexander MacKenzie & Co."

"I hope that, before now, you have discovered the annual income of your estate to exceed your expectations. I should not be sorry to hear of your having disposed of it advantageously; perhaps you might think of investing it in your native land. Follow the example of our old friend M. McGillivray who, I find, has bought an estate in Argylshire for £20,000.

" I trust Mrs. McKenzie (1) and your young family are continuing in their usual good health. Marguerite (2) must now be a stout lady, and my name-sake (3) about finishing his education for college. Had you sent him to this country it might have been as well.

" What do you think of sending Roderick-Charles here when he is fit? We have two good academies in this county, at Thain and at Fortrose. I shall have a little fellow, if God spare him, this day eleven months old, that would accompany him.

" Our little girl is very thriving. Her mother has not recovered her usual health since her last confinement, and I have, at last, been overtaken with the consequences of my sufferings in the North West.

" I think it is of the same nature as Mr. McGillivray's complaint, but it has not yet arrived at a severe crisis. I have, in obedience of orders, become a water drinker and milk sop. I have not tasted wine, spirituous or malt liquor for several months, which I think has been of service to me.

Sir A. Mac-Kenzie's illness.

" The symptoms of the disorder are very disagreeable and most uncomfortable. The exercise of walking, particularly uphill, brings on a headache, stupor or dead pain which at once pervades the whole frame, attended with listlessness, and apathy

(1) Mrs. R. McKenzie was the daughter of Mr. Charles-Jean-Baptiste Chaboillez, an old North-Wester who died at Terrebonne 1809, and the sister of Mrs. Simon McTavish and Mrs. Joseph Bouchette.

(2) Miss Marguerite McKenzie was married to the late Mr. Robert Lester Morrough, prothonotary of the district of Montreal. One of his daughters is now living in Terrebonne.

(3) Lt.-Col. Alexander MacKenzie, who married a Miss Desrivieres and resided in Terrebonne where he died in 1862. The eldest of his sons, Alexander, resides at St. Canute in the county of the Two Mountains; another son, James, joined the Papal Zouaves and received the Cross of Honor for his gallant conduct at Rome; he is at present employed in the postal service at Montreal. Lt.-Col. McKenzie's eldest daughter was married to Mr. L. R. Masson; another daughter to Mr. Cyrille Tessier, of Quebec.

which I cannot well describe. Exercise in a carriage, if not violent, has a beneficial effect. The great doctor Hamilton, of Edinburgh, calls it a shake of the constitution.

" Although the usual time of arrivals from Canada is past, I have not yet lost the hope of hearing from your brothers Henry (1) and James (2). They are, I fear, retaliating on my own neglect for not being more punctual in my correspondence.

" By a letter from Angus Bethune, I heard of Donald's (3) situation on the Columbia. It is one of considerable personal risk but advantageous, had he been able to reach the proper hunting ground.

(1) Mr. Henry McKenzie was a man of considerable administrative abilities, and managed the affairs of the North-West Company, as secretary, for a number of years. He was also entrusted with the management of the estates of Mr. Joseph Frobisher and of Mr. Simon McTavish, and, in that latter capacity, held the agency of the seigniority of Terrebonne. He married, in 1815, Miss Bethune, daughter of Rev. Mr. Bethune, and died in 1832, leaving several children, two of whom : Mr. Simon McTavish MacKenzie, of Montreal, and Mrs. Stow, of Toronto, are still living.

(2) Mr. James McKenzie entered the North-West Company's service in 1794. Five years after, he had charge of Fort Chipewean with Mr. Wentzel. In 1802 he was taken in as a partner and came down to Quebec, where he settled and had charge of the old King's Posts leased by the Company. He appears to have entertained a very deep dislike of the Indians of the North-West and of the *voyageurs* who seem to have reciprocated his feelings. Mr. McKenzie died in Quebec in 1849 leaving four children : two sons and two daughters. His only surviving son, Mr. Keith McKenzie, is now employed by the Hudson's Bay Company in the Straits of Hudson Bay, and one of his daughters was married to Mr. Patrick, formerly Clerk of the House of Commons ; the other is the widow of Lieutenant-Colonel McDougall, of Kingston.

(3) Mr. Donald McKenzie, brother of the Honorable R. McKenzie, left the North-West Company about 1809 and joined Mr. Jacob Astor's Company as a partner. At the dissolution of the latter, he returned to his old friends and continued to enjoy their confidence as he had retained that of Astor. His thorough knowledge of the country south of the Rocky Mountains, his indomitable energy, induced the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company to entrust to him, in 1822, the difficult task of establishing a trading post on *La Fourche des Gros Ventres* (Chesterfield House), among the Pawnees and *Gros Ventres* who had already plundered him a few years before and who threatened to do the same if he returned.

By his energy and skill Mr. McKenzie succeeded in a task which many considered hopeless, and was rewarded by receiving the Governorship of Assiniboia or Red River which he held during eight years to the satisfaction of all.

In 1833, he left the North-West and settled at Mayville in the State of New York where he lived much respected, and died in 1851.

"It is now believed there are plenty beaver, in that country, and it will be very hard if it is wrested from us through the ignorance of our negotiators. That crafty, cunning statesman Gallatin,—Astor's friend,—was the principal negotiator on the part of the Americans. He would be too many for our people who are governed more by theory than practice

"Lady MacKenzie is sitting by me and the children are playing on the floor ; the former joins me most cordially in kind regards to you, Mrs. McKenzie and your young family.

"Yours very truly and sincerely,

"ALEX. MACKENZIE".

"Montreal, 12th May, 1820.

"Dear Sir,

"It is with the deepest regret I have to inform you of the ^{His} death. death of my uncle Sir Alexander MacKenzie.

"Accompanied by Lady MacKenzie and children, he was on his way from Edinburgh to Rosshire and was suddenly taken ill at Mulnain, near Dunkeld, on the 11th March and expired the following morning.

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your obd. Servt.,

"KENNETH DOWIE".

"The Hon. Rod. McKenzie,

"Terrebonne.

"Lachine, 10th January, 1827.

"My dear Sir,

"Two days previous to receipt of your valued communication of the 6th instant, I was apprized by a very polite note from

Lord Dalhousie, of the trouble you have taken in regard to my magisterial preferment, for which I return you my best thanks; and I beg to repeat to you, what I have already assured His Lordship, that my utmost ability shall be exercised to discharge the duties of the office about to devolve on me in such a manner as will afford satisfaction to His Lordship, and do credit to your recommendation; moreover, that, in this Province, His Majesty has not a more devoted and loyal subject, nor is there a more ardent and disinterested admirer of His Lordship's administration, of his public and private life than I have the honor of being.

"I am sorry to learn that my young friend Alexander is still confined, but trust his complaint will not be of a long duration; for these last few days I have been a prisoner myself, owing to a severe cold which will render it necessary for me to postpone a trip I meant to have started on to-morrow for Upper Canada.

"You must have heard that little or nothing was done at the last meeting of the creditors, the object of which was to know the sentiments of those who object to sign the deed of assignment and to point out the consequences to themselves of persisting in a refusal.

"I shall not be able to get to Quebec before the 19th or 20th February, and my stay there cannot exceed 3 or 4 days. Immediately on arrival, I shall find your note; my quarters will be "Paynes Hotel" (1) so that we are likely to be near neighbours as I understand you usually put up there.

The Beaver
Club.

"Your brother and a few North-Westerners have promised to assist me to day in discussing the merits of a roasted beaver; I shall sound them about the plan of renewing the Beaver Club, but fear the season is now too far advanced to do any thing on it this winter. Accept my best thanks for your attention in sending me the rules.

(1) Now, the Albion Hotel, in Palace street.

" Mrs. McKenzie expressed a wish to see Mrs. D. McKenzie's letter to me ; the tattered state in which it is will be accounted for when I say that in the act of opening it on receipt we were mounting a strong rapid in River Winnipeg. The canoe filled, sunk and passengers, papers, crew and baggages were all afloat in a moment, and with much difficulty saved.

" Please offer my kindest respects to Mrs. McKenzie and the rest of your household and believe me to be, with much regard.

" My dear Sir,

" Yours very truly,

" GEO. SIMPSON".

" Roderick McKenzie, Esq.,

" Terrebonne.

" My dear Sir,

" I met my young friend Alexander in the street yesterday and was rejoiced to learn from him that you, Mrs. McKenzie and family were quite well. Your brother Donald, his lady and young folks were in high health and spirits in the month of May last when I passed ten days most agreeably with them at Red River. His government is the most easy under the sun ; he settles the most knotty points with a joke and a laugh, seated on a mortar opposite the gate of his fort, and is more beloved and respected by his subjects than words can tell ; he is not so stout as he was, but much more healthy and looks as if he would live for ever.

Mr. Donald
MacKen-
zie, Gov-
ernor of
Red River.

" I understand you are to be in town soon, if so, I should be most happy to have the opportunity of shaking you by the hand. In the course of a few weeks more I shall be off for England and until then will be much occupied, otherwise I should do myself the pleasure of paying you my respects at Terrebonne.

In Spring, it is probable I shall be able to tell you all about your Ullapool friends, as it is my present intention to spend a few weeks there.

“ Believe me, with regard,

“ My dear Sir,

“ Yours most truly,

“ GEO. SIMPSON ”.

“ Lachine, 4th Sept., 1829 ”.

Arrangements of the Proprietors, clerks, interpreters, &c., of
the North-West Company in the Indian Departments 1799,
(the old Company).

Athabaska.

	G. P. Currency.	
John Finlay, proprietor.		
Simon Fraser wages	1,200	
James MacKenzie.....	300	
Duncan Livingston.....	1,200	
John Stewart.....	240	
James Porter.....	480	
John Thompson.....	240	
James MacDougall.....	60	
G. F. Wintzel.....	240	
John Heinbrucks.....	500	
		4,460
Equipments and necessities for 9 clerks at £20....		2,160

Upper English River.

Angus Shaw, proprietor.		
Donald MacTavish, proprietor.		
Alexander MacKay..... wages	1,200	
Antoine Tourangeau.....	1,000	
Carried forward.....	2,200	6,620

	G. P. Currency.	
Brought forward.....	2,200	6,620
Joseph Cartier.....	1,000	
Simon Réaume.....	600	
		3,800

Lower English River.

Alexander Fraser, proprietor.		
John MacGillivray.....wages	360	
Robert Henry.....	360	
Louis Versailles.....	800	
Charles Messier.....	600	
Pierre Hurteau.....	650	
		2,770
Equipments and necessities for 5 clerks.....		1,200

Fort Dauphin.

A. N. McLeod, proprietor.		
Hugh McGilliswages	1,200	
Michel Allary.....	1,000	
Alexander Farguson.....	120	
Edward Harrison	1,200	
Joseph Grenon	900	
François Nolin	240	
Nicholas Montour.....	180	
		4,840
Equipments and necessities for 7 clerks at £20...		1,680

Upper Fort des Prairies and Rocky Mountains.

Daniel MacKenzie, proprietor.		
John MacDonald “		
James Hughes.....wages	1,200	
Louis Chatellain.....	1,800	
Carried forward.....	3,000	20,910

	G. P. Currency.
Brought forward.....	3,000 20,910
James King	1,200
François Decoigne.....	1,000
Pierre Charette.....	800
Pierre Jerome	750
Baptiste Bruno	800
David Thompson.	1,200
J. Duncan Campbell.....	1,000
Alexander Stewart	240
Jacques Raphael.....	1,200
François Deschamps.	550

Lower Fort des Prairies.

Pierre Belleau.....	2,400
Baptiste Roy.....	600
J. B. Filande.	750
Baptiste Larose	600
	16,090
Equipments and necessities for 16 clerks, &c., at £20...	3,840

Upper Red River.

John Macdonell, proprietor.	
George MacKay.....wages	720
J. Macdonell, jnr.....	240
Joseph Auger.....	750
Pierre Falcon.....	750
François Mallette.....	240
William Munro.....	120
André Poitvin.....	750
	3,570
Equipments and necessities for 7 clerks at £20.	1,680
Carried forward.....	46,090

G. P. Currency.

Brought forward.....

46,090

Lower Red River.

Charles Chaboillez, proprietor.

Alexander Henry.....wages 1,200

J. B. Desmarais..... 800

François Delorme..... 1,000

Michel Coleret..... 750

Antoine Dejarlet..... 700

Louis Giboche..... 750

5,200

Equipments and necessities for 6 clerks at £20....

1,440

Lac Winipic.

William MacKay, proprietor.

John Cameron.....wages 240

Donald MacIntosh..... 600

Benj. Frobisher..... 120

Jac. Dupont..... 800

Joseph Laurent..... 1,000

Gabriel Attina..... 1,200

François Amiot..... 750

4,710

Equipments and necessities for 7 clerks at £20....

1,680

Nipigon.

Duncan Cameron.....wages 2,400

Ronald Cameron..... 1,200

Dugald Cameron..... 600

Jac. Adhémar..... 720

J. Bte Chevalier..... 750

5,670

59,120

	G. P. Currency.	
Brought forward.....	5,670	59,120
Allen MacFarlane.....	500	
J. Bte Pominville.....	1,000	
Fred. Shults.....	960	
		8,130
Equipment and necessities for 7 clerks at £20...		1,680
NOTE : Fred's equipment is included in his wages.		

Pic.

J. B. Perrault.....wages	900	
Augustin Roy.....	600	
		1,500

Michipicoton and the Bay.

Lemaire St-Germain.....wages	1,200	
Baptiste St-Germain.....	1,200	
Léon Chénier.....	750	
		3,150

Sault and Sloop "Otter."

John Burns.....wages	1,500	
John Bennet.....	1,800	
		3,300

South of Lake Superior.

Michel Cadotte, partner.		
Michel Cadotte, partner.		
Simeon Charrette,.....	}	2,000
Charles Gauthier,.....		
Pierre Béjargé (Baillargé).....		

Fonds du Lac.

John Sayer, proprietor.		
J. B. Cadotte.....wages	1,800	
Charles Bousquet.....	900	
Carried forward.....	2,700	78,880

	G. P. Currency.	
Brought forward.....	2,700	78,880
Jean Coton.....	750	
Ignace Chénier.....	600	
Joseph Réaume.	1,000	
Eustache Roussin.....	750	
Vincent Roy.....	750	
	—————	6,550
Equipments and necessities for 7 clerks at £20...		1,680
<i>Lac La Pluie.</i>		
Peter Grant, proprietor.		
Arch. MacLellan.....wages	960	
Charles Latour	950	
Mich. Machard.....	700	
	—————	2,610
<i>Grand Portage.</i>		
Doctor Munro.....wages	1,200	
Charles Hesse	600	
Zacharie Clouthier.....	750	
Antoine Colin	600	
Jacques Vandreil.....	600	
François Boileau.....	1,000	
Bruce	300	
	—————	5,050
Equipments omitted.....		3,000
		—————
		97,770

This list was found among the Hon. R. MacKenzie's papers, and was probably prepared by him on his appointment as one of the Agents of the Old North-West Company, 1799.

MR W. F. WENTZEL

LETTERS

TO THE

HON. RODERIC MCKENZIE

1807-1824

Mr. Willard-Ferdinand Wentzel was a Norwegian. He entered the service of the North-West Company in 1799 as an apprentice clerk, and spent most of his life in the Athabasca and MacKenzie regions, where he endured more than his share of the hardships of a "winterer's" life in the Northern Departments.

He was, it appears, a man of small stature, very unhandsome, but highly intelligent and of a jovial, keen but sarcastic turn of mind ; quick at finding out people's weak points and foibles, and taking great delight in mimicking them. This disposition of his deprived him of the kindly support of many who might doubtless have helped him on, and contributed possibly to prevent his promotion in the service of the Company.

Mr. George Keith, one of the "Partners" in the North-West Company and, later, one of the Chief Factors in the Hudson Bay Company, in his letters to Mr. Roderic McKenzie, speaks in the most complimentary terms of his long years of service and of the hardships he endured.

Mr. Ross Cox, in his book "Adventures on the Columbia River," says that he met him in 1811, and travelled with him from Lake *La Pluie* to Fort William, where Wentzel was going to seek for justice from the

Company. Mr. Cox speaks of him as an active and enterprising trader, a man of great integrity, whose name was ever omitted from the list of favorite clerks because he had no relatives to press his claims. He had, in consequence, the mortification of seeing younger men preferred to him, several of whom had never suffered the pangs of hunger in the service of the Company.

He returned from Fort William with an engagement for three years, at the maximum salary allowed to clerks,—two hundred pounds a year,—but never after felt comfortable in the service and always regretted he could not leave the country.

Mr. Wentzel had lived twenty years amongst the Northern tribes when Sir John Franklin undertook his memorable expedition by land to the Arctic Ocean. Wentzel's knowledge of the Natives, of their language, manners and customs caused him to be requested to accompany the expedition, in order to superintend the *voyageurs* and take charge of, and propitiate the Indians who had joined it.

The want of supplies and provisions, however, soon obliged Franklin to dispense with the services of the Indians and to continue his journey with the *voyageurs* only. After reaching the shores of the Arctic Ocean, Mr. Wentzel was sent back to Great Bear Lake with despatches from the Commander, and was requested to collect provisions at Fort Enterprise for the return of the party. Finding neither game nor hunters at Great

Bear Lake, he pushed on to Great Slave Lake, but with no better success, and he soon after heard of the terrible disaster which had befallen the expedition.

It was generally believed in the North-West that Sir John Franklin paid no attention to the advice of Mr. Wentzel and of other winterers of the North-West and Hudson Bay Companies, who warned him against continuing the expedition before having provided, either *en cache* or otherwise, the necessary supplies for the return. The expedition was in a starving condition from its beginning, and it proved very fortunate for Mr. Wentzel and the four *voyageurs* who accompanied him, that he was sent back.

Mr. Wentzel was a musician; Franklin even says, "an excellent musician!" This talent of his brightened the long and dreary hours of his life and contributed to keep all cheerful around him. A collection of the *voyageurs* songs made by him is in our possession, but they are mostly obscene and unfit for publication.

Mr. Wentzel, while at Great Bear Lake, took, as a wife, a *Montagnais* woman who gave him two children: a daughter married, first to a Canadian named Larivière, then to a half breed, Louison Goulet, and whose children are settled at Lake Manitoba Mission; and a son, Alexander, born at *Ile à la Crosse*, who married a half breed named Laferté. Alexander Wentzel was a carpenter; he built the church at St. Norbert, 1855, and left four sons, all living at St. Agathe.

LETTER N° 1, (1807).

The country around the Grand River.—Natural productions.—Animals and birds.—Modes of hunting.—The climate.—The Natives, their dress, appearance, habits, religion, tools and weapons.—The *engagés* of the North-West Company.—History of the trade at Grand River.—Vocabulary of the Beaver language.

Nos. 2 AND 3, (1809 AND 1810.)

Confirming the former. (Not printed.)

N° 4, (1811).

Sufferings and Starvation.—Music in the North-West.

N° 5, (1814).

Indian conspiracies against the traders.—The decline of “far-famed Athabaska, the school of the North.”—The Athabaska library.—Great Bear Lake.—The Sea tribe, or *Sharp-eyes*.

N° 6, (1815).

Rejoicings in the North-West on the cessation of hostilities with the United States.—Decline of the trade in the North.—The MacKenzie River Department abandoned.

N° 7, (1816).

Quarrels with the Hudson Bay Company.—Opposition in Athabaska.—Disaster to the Hudson Bay Company's people.

N° 8, (1818).

Successful trade in Athabaska.—The Red River settlement.

N° 9, (1819).

Formidable preparations of the Hudson Bay Company under Messrs. Colin Robertson and John Clarke.—Mr. Robertson, a prisoner at Fort Chipewyan.—Success of the North-West Company.—The MacKenzie River trade resumed.—Wages of clerks and men.

N° 10, (1820).

The Grand Rapid outrage.—Open war between the Hudson Bay and North-West companies; its effects on the Natives.—Sufferings and death of Mr. Benjamin Frobisher.—The Red River settlement.—Arrival of Lieutenant Franklin at Fort Chipewyan, on his Land Artic expedition; instructions from Mr. Simon MacGillivray to the partners and clerks of the North West Company.

N° 11, (1821).

Mr. Wentzel is attached to the Land Artic Expedition under Lieutenant Franklin.—Intense cold.—Affairs in Athabaska.—Mr. Simpson takes charge of the Hudson Bay Company's interests in the North-West.

N° 12, (1822).

Franklin's Land Artic Expedition having reached the Polar Sea, Mr. Wentzel returns with despatches. He winters at Fort Chipewyan, where he receives news of the disastrous result of the Expedition.

N° 13, (1823).

Divers Artic expeditions spoken of.—Disclosures on Lieut. Franklin's expedition. Misconduct of the officers.—Effect of the coalition of the Hudson Bay and North-West companies on their employés in the North-West.

N° 14, (1824).

Further disclosures relating to Lieut. Franklin's expedition.—Contradictory statements of Doctor Richardson relating to Robert Hood's death and that of Michel, the Iroquois.—Altered condition of the country after the coalition.—Different plans proposed for exploring the unknown parts of the Mac-Kenzie River Department.

TO LIEUT. JOHN MCKENZIE, (1818).

Roman Catholic clergy sent to Red River.—Miserable condition of the colonists in Red River

LETTER No. 1.

Forks MacKenzie River, March 27th, 1807.

Rod. McKenzie, Esq.,

Dear Sir,

Agreeably to the request you intimated to me last Fall per a printed memorandum, I have the pleasure to forward the following collection, which is the best the inconveniences arising from a dull and illiterate capacity allow me to make. These considerations will induce you, I hope, to overlook the many errors and inaccuracies I may have committed in the undertaking. My desire to please you will excuse my attempting what is so much above my abilities to handle so as to prove entraining to you and creditable to myself.

The Grand River (1) which obtains its waters from Slave Lake and which empties into the Pacific ocean (2), is perhaps one of the longest and most beautiful rivers in the North. It steers a straight course, with little variation, and has a smooth tho' strong current, which is interrupted by only two or three rapids of no consequence and of no length. Islands lie interspersed here and there and contain a good stock of wood. Thus it glitters through an ungrateful country, enjoying the waters of three middling large rivers. It is about half to three quarters of a league broad at its widest place. The banks on both sides

(1) MacKenzie River.

(2) Error common to many at the time in the North-West.

are high and barren, which is supposed to be occasioned by the great fires made in the Spring season by the inhabitants to clear the country of underwood, in order to enjoy more ease when hunting.

The surface of the country is little elevated at this place to what it is at some distance from this downward, where, I am told, the banks are exceedingly high and rocky. The whole country from this to Slave Lake is marshy and swampy. At a short distance in land, it is interspersed, here and there, with mountains, hills and valleys.

The soil.

The soil is of a greyish cast, being a mixture of earth, clay and sand, which the Canadians tell me can produce wheat, oats, peas, barley and turnips; vegetables decrease in growth.

Principal mountains.

The principal mountains form no connection with each other. The Rocky Mountain, the most extensive in the country, lies on the south side of Grand River and runs north and south in direction, at a little distance from Grand River, two days below this. From thence it continues, without varying its course, to the River *au Liard*—formerly called Grand River Forks—and from thence in different directions to the upper part of Peace River. Its shape is very irregular and its extent unknown. I am told that this mountain is inhabited by several tribes of Savages, namely, *Nahanies*, *Dahoteena* and *Nombahoteenais*, besides many others who are unacquainted with white people. The only information I can get concerning these Natives is that they inhabit these rocks, live upon caribou and goat flesh and make war upon each other.

The next largest mountain is the Horn Mountain which lies on the north side of the Grand River and runs from north-east to south-west. This mountain takes its rise somewhere near Mountain Island in Slave Lake, and ends about a league below this, when it steers off again in a north-east direction. Its general direction is upon a straight line, and its height, as well as that

of the Rocky Mountain, is unknown. The latter is so high that its summit is sometimes invisible for several days and hidden in the clouds. Its composition is rocks from which it derives its name, while Horn Mountain is composed of a marshy soil and derives its name from the number of Carribou horns found upon it. Besides these mountains, there are an infinite number of inferior ones which lie here and there without any connexion with the two above, or among themselves.

As to volcanoes, there are some along the North side of the Volcanoes. Grand River, at a little distance this side of Bear Lake River, and which are visible from this river. From these, issue several columns of smoke which have a strong smell of coal and sulphur. I was told by Mr. John Thain, one who had personally inspected them, that the fire was not above one foot under ground ; the flames are pale and the smoke black ; the holes from which the blazes appear are small and numerous. No irruptions, such as are experienced in the Eastern hemisphere, ever occurred here to the knowledge of the Indians.

Ores of two kinds only are known among the Natives, and Ores and minerals. these in the Rocky Mountain ; one is supposed to be silver, a piece of which was traded by one Mr. Duncan Levingston, who transmitted it to the Gentleman Proprietor of the North-West Company who resided in Athabasca in the year 1796 ; since then, no account of the dimensions of the mine from which it came have been received.

The other is a metal which, in former times, the inhabitants made use of to strike fire, and whose sparks when struck upon a flint are scarcely visible. This ore is of a fine colour and is supposed to be a mixture of steel and earth and is exceedingly weighty. It is found in the small creek which falls into the *Rivière au Liard* about four days march from this place.

Its mineral produce is coal, black lead of a very fine cast, orange coloured earth which, when heated by a fire, becomes red

and thus serves as vermilion to the inhabitants; flint stone in abundance, but these, with the ore, are the produce of the River *au Liard*.

Trees and plants. The large wood is the red and white pine, cypress, birch, poplar and *liard*; the under wood is the elder, willow, red wood, and swamp tea, none of which, except the red wood, bear fruit. The plants known to me are the *plantin*, wild mint, mountain tea which bear fruit, wild sives, liquorice roots, sarsaparilla and *queue de rats*, besides many others, the names and use of which I am unacquainted with.

Fruits. The fruits of this solitary region are the *poire*, gooseberry, raspberry, strawberry, moose deer berry, rose buttons, red and black currants, thimbleberry, huckleberry, cramberry, crowberry, pithagomine, or *queue dépouillée*, juniperberry, bearberry, choakberry and another berry, the name of which I do not know except in the Indian language, which they call *ouh-ka chwa*. They bud about the latter end of May, flower about the 15th of June and ripen near the 20th August, when they are deemed wholesome to the body and delicious to the taste.

Dyes. The dyes made use of by the Indians to stain porcupine quills and feathers, which are the only thing they stain, are the roots of a plant which the Canadians call *Savoyan*; its colour is of an orange cast. This root, boiled with cramberry, dyes a beautiful light red; the dyes for yellow are another small root which they gather in marshy plains.

Insects. The insects in this country are the same as in Canada, except that the *Criquet* is not to be found.

Birds. The water fowls are: the great and small swan, large and little bustard, grey and white goose; among ducks, the large grey duck, spoon bill duck, *Peigne en queue*, *Kanhanwee*, *Pétoine*, small grey duck and water fowl, loon; grey, white and black headed gulls; sea and land plovers, snipe and crane, besides the pelican.

The land birds are the eagles; the fish, musquito and night hawks; grey and white owls, crows, pheasants; the wood, swamp and white partridge, king-fishers, robins, black birds, nightingales, yellow birds, besides many others whose names I cannot make out.

The large and small animals are elks, large and small caribou; grey, black and red bears; the goat, besides another animal which is peculiar to the Rocky Mountains. This animal, the Indians tell me, is about the size and bulk of an elk, with short legs, a long neck, and has two great horns like a stag under which two small ones sprout out. The flesh of this beast, they say, has a very fine taste. Though I have never seen any, I have tasted the grease of the back fat, and found it in taste and flavour equal to the moose deer *Dépouille* (1), the grease somewhat more oily; its colour is white.

The other animals are the beaver, otter, wolverine, wolf, lynx; red, grey, white and black foxes, porcupine, ground hog, marten, mink; common red, ground and flying squirrels; hares, bats and mice.

Modes of hunting are numerous. In the spring, when a crust is formed upon the snow, the Indians frequently run down the elk and caribou, which they fatigue so much that they often kill them with their spears. In summer and winter, they pursue them with dogs into snares; these are ropes about three fathoms long made of large *babiche* well twisted with a spring knot at each end. These they tie upon a small tree on the tracks of the animals which, when taken, carry off the sling until the little tree to which it is fastened happens to catch against or between two large trees. The animal finding itself stopped, makes such efforts as to put an end to its life. The flesh is then very bad, being overheated and full of blood.

(1) Fat on the ribs between flesh and skin.

In the rutting season, which always happens in autumn, the natives rub the shoulder blade of an elk against a tree, at the same time imitating the cry of an elk; this brings the animal quite close, when they are easily killed with bows and arrows. The chase of the caribou in rutting season is quite different. When a man kills a female, he raises the skin off the head from the thickest part of the neck to the extremity of the nose, this is stuffed with straw or rather with hay and put to dry. When perfectly dry they fix the horns, which had been severed from the head, in their proper place and then go hunting. They run their arm in this skin which is so well arranged that it perfectly imitates the animal itself. When they see a drove of caribous in the distance they wave this skin and imitate the cries and tricks of the animal and bring the males close to them.

.....

Their mode of hunting beaver is to make wooden traps upon the lodges in the fall, and in winter they trench the beaver; all other animals, they take in snares.

Lakes.

Lakes are numerous on the north side of the Grand River. The principal ones and those which offer the best fisheries are: the Great Willow, the Porcupine and Long Lakes. The first two are connected by a narrow strait; the latter is near Bear Lake from which it is separated by a narrow neck of land only. All these lakes empty into the Grand River. The former is about 40 leagues from this place, in a northern direction, the latter is at a much greater distance in the same direction. These lakes are fishing abodes for many families of Natives; none of them are of any considerable extent. The Long Lake is supposed to be the largest and yet it is computed at about twenty to twenty-five leagues long by about three broad.

On the south side of the Grand River, there are only two of any note, the first is the Trout Lake, not far in land from the entrance of the Grand River. We formerly got a great quantity

of peltries from this lake, it being a fishing place for a few Indian families. The other is the Willow Lake which lies north-west from this Fort at a distance of about twenty leagues; this lake is a middling size lake, supposed to be about forty miles broad by sixty long. Besides the above mentioned, there are numberless small lakes dispersed here and there on the north side which however form no connection, tho' they are placed very near each other.

The rivers of any note which form a junction with the Grand Rivers. River, are the River *au Liard* (formerly called the Grand River Forks). This river comes from the southward and derives its waters from the Rocky Mountains and the discharges of small lakes. The next is the outlet of the Great Willow Lake which falls in with the Grand River about one hundred and fifty miles below this place; the last is Bear River; all three are shallow and rapid. The River *au Liard* which is considered the largest is so shallow that Mr. Keith, who has charge of a Fort in the upper part, had the greatest difficulty in reaching his winter quarters last fall with six pieces of goods only in his canoe (1). This river produces the mines and minerals before mentioned and the best peltries that are taken out of this Department.

Rapids are numerous in these three last mentioned rivers, but there are no portages. In the Grand River, no cataracts are to be met with and but two rapids which, I have already observed, are not dangerous. The most dangerous is a place called The Falling Beaver below the Rocky Mountain, and is a kind of whirlpool at high water only and is then perilous to cross; if there be any other doubtful places they are unknown to me. The nature of these waters I believe to be wholesome; they are clear as well in summer as in winter.

With regard to mineral springs, I have heard of but one which is in the Rocky Mountains, in the upper part of the River *au Liard*: ^{Poisonous spring.}

(1) See Mr. George Keith's letter, 7th January, 1807.

the inhabitants tell me it is venemous, two of them having drank of it, both died. It attacks the nerves and brings on a slow fever, and then death, but without any extraordinary agony. The water of this spring is clear, and very cold, even in the greatest heat of Summer.

Fishes.

The different sorts of fish to be met with in the lakes and rivers of these deserts are the large and the salmon trout, *inconnu*, (1) white fish, white and red carp, pickerel, pike, blue fish, tolliby and *Loche*.

The modes of fishing practised by the Natives consist in nets and hooks; the former made of the rind of the willow which is twisted and then made like the nets made in Canada; their average length is forty yards, the height ten yards, and the meshes four and a half inches. These are set in the water with pieces of split wood for floats and stones for weights.

Their lines are made of the same *ok ham* as their nets; their hooks are made of wood, bones and sometimes of bird's claws.

Climate.

In winter the climate is extremely severe; the cold is some years so great that the ice of the Grand River has been known to be five feet and a half thick. The river frequently congeals about the 25th or 28th of November and is not navigable until the end of May or the commencement of June. Some years it clears earlier, but it is very seldom. Last year, it was not fordable before the 24th June; however such severity is seldom experienced. Frost generally sets in about the 15th of September and sometimes it freezes during the nights of the whole summer season.

The climate in the upper part of River *au Liard* is much milder than at this place; Spring is at least a fortnight or three weeks earlier and Fall much later. The river is taken in fall by the first frost.

(1) A species of salmon, probably the "Wananish." so plentiful in Lake St. John, P. Q. : some say it is found in the MacKenzie River only.

In summer, the nights are clear, short and cool, and the days are on the contrary long and the heat insupportable. The nights are so clear during the summer that, like Norwegians, we can see to read and write without the help of a candle. It is quite the reverse in winter, we are then involved in almost perpetual darkness.

The air is, I believe, healthy, as no endemial diseases prevail Health. among the Natives; the disorders most frequent among them are colds, consumption and fevers, supposed to be occasioned by their obstinacy in the pursuit of animals in the spring season, and eating putrified meat, such as beasts that are found dead in their snares and which had perhaps been there a month or so. They eat with as good appetite as if it was the most delicious food, any animal they find that died either of wounds or sickness and which is already almost wasted by maggots: they even pretend that such meat has a much sweeter flavour.

The inhabitants of the country which I have endeavoured to Natives. describe are the Beaver Indians, but their original name is *Echella-o-tuna* or *Gens des Bois Forts*, and pretend to be a branch of the tribe of the Beaver Indians of Peace River, from whom they had been formerly separated and then driven this way by their inveterate enemies the Crees who, previous to the introduction of European arms into this quarter, were continually waging war against them. These wars exterminated great numbers of them, so that they were at length reduced from a numerous tribe to but about 200 men.

Their language still bears an analogy to that of the Peace Language. River Indians, who are at most not above seven or eight days walk in an easterly direction from the place where those of the Grand River reside.

Though there is some affinity between the languages of these two tribes, yet they differ considerably in their manners and

customs, for these Indians are very effeminate and never wage war with other nations, while those of the Peace River are a war-like tribe and always at war with their neighbours and often with their nearest relations. The Indians of this Fort and those of River *au Liard* form but one nation tho' they wish to make it appear otherwise. As to the number of women and children, it is impossible for me who have never seen a fourth of them, to say; but to give a moderate guess they are computed to about three hundred.

Scarcity of
women.

The fair sex in the tribe which resides in the upper part of the Forks are few in number, the cause of which may be ascribed to the custom they have of often destroying the female children when just born. The only reason they give for this barbarous custom, is that it is a great deal of trouble to bring up girls, and that women are only an encumbrance, useless in time of war and exceedingly voracious in time of want. This cruel habit is however wearing away. Yet this scarcity of women does not induce them to prostitute their wives among themselves or to strangers like other savage tribes inhabiting the North. One woman is common to two brothers and often to three; mothers will cohabit with their sons, brothers with their sisters, but a father will seldom cohabit with his daughter.

Appearance and
dress of the
men.

The men are commonly of the middle size, have well proportioned limbs, regular features and are fairer in complexion than any other Indian nation I have seen. They wear their hair long behind, and short before, like the Canadians; those who desire to appear greater bucks than the rest, tie their hair, wear ornaments, such as feathers, beads in their ears, and paint or tattoo their faces ridiculously ugly. Around their head, they wear a piece of beaver, otter or marten skin decorated with a bunch of feathers before and behind. The rest of their dress consists of a beaver robe, a *capot*, a *brayet*, and leggings of dressed moose deer skin. Their robes and *capots* are ornamented with

several bunches of leather strings garnished with porcupine quills of different colours, the ends of which are hung with beaver claws. About their neck they have a well polished piece of caribou horn, which is white and bent around the neck; on their arms and wrists they tie bracelets and arm bands made also of porcupine quills; around their waist they have also a porcupine quill belt curiously wrought and variegated with quills of different colours.

The women are in general of a lower stature than the men, ^{The wo-} wear their hair and ornaments like them, and are reckoned ^{men.} handsome. Their dress in winter is a *cotillon*, woven like a mat, of thongs of hare skin and a robe of the same *drug*; on their heads they have a cap shaped like a milled cap (?) made of the same stuff. Their leggings are long and made like trowsers except in the front where an apperture is left to attend the calls of nature. Their summer dress consists of a leather *cotillon*, leather robe, leggings, &c., as in winter.

Their husbands are very kind to them, their only business being to make the men's clothes and their own, while the men's work is to chop wood, strike fire, make the campment, hunt, &c., &c. These Indians have a strange custom, which, if it is not the most barbarous, is at least the most unnatural and disgusting of any I ever heard of. Whenever the women bring forth a male child, they have a rule of pulling its legs every night and morning, and squeeze its thighs, hoping by a superstitious notion to procure him a pair of long shanks necessary for a hunter, as being greatly conducive to his becoming a great runner. This custom is kept up until the boy is two years old, when it is dropped and he is allowed to grow according to nature (1).....

Besides this custom they have that also of biting, beating, ^{Mourning.} knocking themselves with axes; tearing their clothes, cutting

(1) The rest, unfit for publication.

their hair at the loss of any of their relations; some carry their crazy capers to such a pitch of frenzy as to kill themselves with the blows they so inflict.

They leave their dead on the spot where they die, without removing them; they strew over them a few leaves in summer or snow in winter, with a little earth; over this they make a kind of small hut of large wood, well secured from wild animals, and they lay in the grave all the deceased things, i.e. instruments, arms, clothes, &c.

Religion.

I have heard of no mysteries or religious rites existing among them; they have a confused idea of the deluge, but the absurd stories, and improbable adventures with which it is filled renders it so useless that I shall leave this to people fond of romance. They also allow the existence of a Supreme Being whose invisible jurisprudence over them they positively deny, being ignorant of any other rulers of the earth than the Natives who inhabit it. The opinion they have of a future state of existence is comprised in these few words, that when any of them die, they resume life again under the form of a young child.

They have romantic and fabulous tales but which have neither moral tendency nor moral interpretation, therefore I shall not trouble you with an account of them. (1)

Amusements.

Their only amusements are gallantry, dancing and singing. When a dance is open they form themselves into a circle when all the men join in one voice and dance until they are broken down with fatigue. They move regularly and keep good time with their songs which are far from being disagreeable to the ear, any more than their manner of dancing to the sight. Sometimes two young bucks will sally forth and dance a jig, which consists of various contorsions perfectly ludicrous but not easily described. Before the ball is open they untie or loosen their

(1) See Mr. George Keith's letter of 1st December, 1808 to Mr. Roderic McKenzie, "Tales of the Beaver Indians."

hair and grease it so much that it appears stiff, then they strew swan's down upon their heads and rub a little vermilion on their hands and faces; thus modelled they believe themselves agreeable to the women and handsome to spectators.

Their economy consists in hoarding up as much provisions as Economy. possible for the winter and in obtaining a great quantity of *original* snares. He who is the best hunter and who has the greatest number of snares is the greatest and richest man. When an Indian kills an animal, it is not his own, for he receives the smallest share, it is separated among the others who send a piece of their share, when cooked, to the hunter.

Their dispositions are sociable, mild and harmless; they never Character. make war with their neighbours and never quarrel with the Whites; they are submissive and very obedient, perhaps through ignorance. By what I can learn by hearsay and my own observation, they are naturally timorous, great liars, lazy and extremely curious; yet generally good natured, courteous to strangers, peaceable among themselves and easily contented.

As to forms of government, police and regulations, they have Government. none. When war is declared upon them, they elect a chief from among the old men; to him they submit for advice and commandment; so soon as peace is obtained, this chief is no more obeyed or attended to any further than to support him and his family when old, and ask his opinions in time of trouble. These chiefs hardly merit the title they enjoy. *Na-kan-au-Bettau* or Great Chief is the only one who is a little respected and obeyed; he is a middling size corpulent fellow, not without a competent share of common sense, at least enough to procure skins and provisions without hunting for them.

These Indians subsist upon every species of animals, birds and Food. fish, making no exception from the elk down to the mouse; from the swan to the smallest bird, the crow even is not excepted, and all fish is deemed equally palatable. They have also the dirty

custom of eating putrified and filthy flesh, such as animals that die of diseases or wounds, whether rotten, full of maggots or otherwise. And yet these savages are healthy, and few of them die of sickness; some live to such an advanced age as to see the third and fourth generation of their children.

Filial devotion.

When old age deprives them of the use of their limbs, their sons or nearest relations have enough respect for their grey hair, not to leave them in a campment or put them in any perilous position where their lives are endangered; on the contrary, the greatest care is taken of them and they are always carried by their sons or relations. I saw a man who was so old that he could no more swallow meat, but was fed upon no other kind of provisions but hare brains, and the marrow and brains of moose deer. He died only four years ago.

The manner in which they cook their victuals is by putting the meat in large bark dishes in which they throw a succession of red hot stones until the meat is boiled. Others boil their meat by hanging these bark dishes over a slow fire, high enough however to keep the fire from consuming the dishes.

In summer, they split their meat very thin and put it upon scaffold to dry by the heat of the sun; when perfectly dry, they pound it between two stones; thus prepared, it can keep for several years and is tolerably good when mixed up with grease; this is our staple article of provisions *when travelling*, it is called *laureau* or *Pimecan*.

Habitations.

The habitations of these people are built in oblong figure, of pieces of wood placed upon one another, the roof of which is thatched with *sapin* and the sides cemented or rather calked with moss; an aperture is left at each end to take in large trees for fuel, and another at the top to let out the smoke.

Tools and weapons.

The instruments and the weapons in use among them, before they had been provided with better by the North-West Company, were axes, dagues, spears, bows and arrows. Their axes were

of stone shaped in the form of a pickaxe, the middle of which was scolloped in order to fit it to the end of a stick which, when well fastened, answered the purpose of a handle; thus arranged, they could hew or rather hack down the largest tree. A pole of about nine feet long with a bone blade at one end, furnished with a row of barbs, composed their spears; these bones are arranged and polished with beaver teeth, of which they also make use in making their bows and arrows. Their bows are made of dried willow at the end of which is fixed a small pointed bone furnished also with a barb on each side, as also at the extremity of their arrows which are about two feet long; some have flint stone points to their arrows, which inflict a mortal wound, being something similar to chewed ball. With these they are dexterous, being able to shoot an elk almost as far as with a gun.

Their snow-shoes, the length of which is from five to eight ^{Snow-shoes.} feet, are made of pine, turned up in the front, and then brought round in the form of a demi circle; the head is narrow, but it gradually opens towards the middle to the breadth of about a foot to fourteen inches, and from thence it is brought to a point behind. With these they can nimbly walk over the most complicated *embarras* or through the thickest wood.

The canoes of this nation are made of birch bark from twelve ^{Canoes.} to eighteen feet long, and about two feet broad in the middle; the bottom is flat, and the two ends, gradually tapering into a point, rise about one foot and a half obliquely out of the water. They go well and weigh little, being encumbered with little wood i.e. *varanques* and *lisses*.

Their manner of making war is that of every Indian tribe. ^{They dislike war.} They go in quest of their enemies in the summer and when they discover a family or so in fatal security, they approach them at or near day break when slumber is sound and then kill as many as possible. They never scalp, but strip the dead of their

dresses with which they show off upon their return to their own families.

They tell me that they never began a war with any of their neighbours; when hunting, they would sometimes fall in with another hunting party of their enemies. Whether in day time or at night, they all lent a hand to fell a great many trees the branches of which they sharpened in order to answer the purpose of *chevaux de frise*; behind this entrenchment they defended themselves until peace was called for by either party, which is made known by the display of a piece of meat fastened to the end of a long stick, which the conquered party would offer to the conqueror. If this did not prove effectual, an arrow was sent by a resolute fellow; this last always prevailed; if not, the ambassador was never hurt, but quietly sent back.

Their war dress consists of a cap decorated with feathers before and behind, sometimes bear claws sewed to a piece of leather served the purpose of a cap. From their neck down to their thighs, they wear a mat made of willow switches; it covers the whole front and guards against arrows, as it is close matted for that purpose. Besides this, they carry a shield on their left arm; this is a board ten inches broad, half an inch thick and one and a half feet long; the whole forming their war dress.

General
character.

The general character of that part of the tribe inhabiting the Forks may be stated in these few words. Mild of temper, hospitable and compassionate to strangers, industrious, obedient and sociable Indians. Take away that unnatural custom of destroying their female infants, and the disgusting practise..... they may be considered the best natured and most peaceable set of people perhaps in all America. Those of this place, tho' not a separate tribe but only a distinct body, are quite the reverse; they are envious, crafty, indolent and gluttonous, yet they retain the good quality of a courteous generosity and of being a free-

hearted people to strangers, and never commence disputes with either Whites or among themselves. Thus, overlooking the bad qualities which are not cruel and barbarous in themselves, since they are committed thro' ignorance, they will deserve being called on the whole "a good people."

The productions of the country are the furs of the different species of animals which are the beaver, otter, lynx, wolverine, marten, mink and bears, the amounts of which, made into packs of eighty pounds weight, on an average, is sixty-five packs yearly, fully one third of which are lynx skins; but the most important is the beaver and bear. The value of the whole has now and then been intimated to me, but as the sale frequently depends upon secret circumstances which are not always imparted to the clerks of the Company, I shall say nothing more on that head.

The lower parts produce very poor returns, their trade consisting in almost nothing but a display of forty or fifty packs made up of muskrats, the profits of which add very little to the purses of the parties concerned in the trade.

The wages allowed to a clerk at the expiration of a long term of seven years, which he has served as an apprentice for the sum of one hundred pounds for the whole term, was formerly the reasonable salary of one hundred pounds per annum, but since the late contention between the North-West Company and the X. Y. Company (1) and their junction, we are reduced to the sum of sixty pounds for the first year, eighty for the second, and one hundred for the third. For further wages we must depend on success in trade and friends in power. Some enjoy an income of two hundred a year; such prices were only given because the times were pressing. However, we are flattered and feed our-

Productions of the country.

North-West Company's employés.

(1) The Company formed by Sir Alexander McKenzie and others in 1801 and which joined with the "Old Concern" at Mr. McTavish's death, 1804.

selves upon the hope of once being admitted to a share in the Company, which, only friends and merit can procure us.

The prices of common men or Canadians are, by an established rule, never to exceed fifty or sixty pounds, being the highest, the lowest is twenty-five pounds, but few have these low prices.

History of
the trade.

I shall confine my statement of the beginning of commerce to the Indians of the Grand River, as I do not suppose any thing further is required from me. A Fort was established at Slave Lake, in the year 1786, for the Chipewean Nation by the North-West Company, under the care of *Monsieur Le Roux*, who was a clerk to the said Company. This gentleman, not being of a very enterprising disposition, gave himself little trouble in enquiring of the Chipewears whether the countries beyond Slave Lake were inhabited by Indian tribes or not, but remained quiet waiting for the furs of the before mentioned nation. These being somewhat lazy to hunt, went in quest of strange nations with whom they would trade an old knife or a worn out axe, which they had got for little or nothing, for double or triple its value, till, at length, Mr. Leroux sent the English Chief, the principal man of the Chipewean tribe, to do his best in order to induce them to trade at the fort.

This expedition was crowned with success, and this good fortune was soon followed by another of more consequence. One James Sutherland, a common man in the Company's service, went in quest of them and brought a great number with him in the spring of the same year, from whom a considerable number of peltries was traded. In the course of this visit, a few presents were made to the Great Men which produced the desired effect, as these people gave such a high character of the white men's generosity and good disposition, that all the neighbouring nations who heard of it, vied, the next year, with each other who should trade the most with the Fort.

With these furs they travelled in winter upwards of a month, carrying them on their backs or dragging them on sledges, and leaving their families nearly two hundred miles behind. This was far from suiting their purpose, as they often starved in such tedious journeys, and only two-thirds of them would go to the Fort, the other third remaining to take care of the families during the others' absence. At length, the Company was persuaded by interested motives to establish a fort at Marten Lake the third year after the opening of trade with these tribes. This new post was fifteen days' march nearer to their lands, the trade was consequently carried on with greater success and ease.

This again was still found too inconvenient, as being too far distant from their families, so that, in 1796, Mr. Duncan Levingston, by the Companies' order, built a Fort in the Grand River about eighty miles from its source. Under his management these people were modelled anew and brought under an implicit obedience to the Whites' authority. He enjoyed his success, which was great, for the space of three years, when he was killed with three Canadians and his interpreter while on a voyage of discovery to the sea by the way of Grand River, about eight days' march downward from this place, by a fierce nation called the Esquimaux who inhabit the borders of the Ocean.

After his death, which happened in 1799, Mr. John Thomson was promoted to his place, and divided this nation the following year into two distinct bodies; but instead of an increase of trade as expected, a drawback of six packs was experienced the first year, sixteen the next, and so continually until last year, and we begin again to recover a few more packs. This, however, was not occasioned by the inactivity of those who had charge of the department, but rather by the late struggle between the X. Y. and the North-West Companies and, partly, by the death of many Natives.

Competition.

From competition arises a variety of circumstances which, for a moment, promote the interest of many, in augmenting wages and unfurling capacities which, without this, would perhaps never have been demonstrated, tho' it is often prejudicial to morals and equally injurious to the character of many.

Besides this, several people who are roguish in private and dissemblers in public (like at court) are the most noticed. Their persons are publicly attended to, and their interests are promoted to the greatest and most advantageous expectations. Shares in the Company are given to them altho' they never perhaps deserved it. While these are thus advanced to what their merits otherwise would not have entitled them, others, honest characters, let their abilities be ever so great, are disregarded for the time being, and must think themselves happy in having the good fortune to gather the rags and be allowed the approaches of these *dissembling courtiers*.

Another bad effect of competition is drunkenness, murder, theft, besides many other vices.

With respect to the Indians, the care and attention that is paid (I was going to say to their persons) to them for the sake of their skins renders them much more civilized and cunning. By this, they take a footing which, with time, induces them to commit actions which otherwise they would not have dared to mention. Indolence, robbery and murder are the consequences of an opposition in trade: people would suppose it would rouse their attention to industry, having goods at a lower price, but far to the contrary; drunkenness, idleness and vice are preferred; they are, indeed, of a beggarly disposition. Thus no good can be derived from the turbulent struggles of opposition in this country; it destroys trade, creates vice, and renders people crafty, ruins good morals, and almost totally abolishes every humane sentiment in both Christian and Indian breast.

VOCABULARY

Ya-ten-naw dy.....	God.
Taie	Father.
An-na.....	Mother.
Se-chu-ai	My son.
Set-toa	My daughter.
Gun-naw-ai.....	Brother.
Sor-ra	Sister.
Din-nai	Husband.
Tse-Kegh	Wife.
Boy }	the same as man and woman.
Girl }	
Taizo-na.....	Child.
Din-ny-yeetha	Man.
Tsai.....	Woman.
El-thee.....	Head.
In-nai.....	Face.
Eghon	Nose.
En-nau-ghai.....	Eyes.
In nih	Nostrils.
En-naw-the-la-thun	Eye brows.
Ette-zau-dai	Ear.
Elte-zid-dai.....	Forehead
Thee-ghaw	Hair.
In-nec-go-thin	Cheeks.
Eth-aw	Mouth.
Ekaw-sai	Throat.
Ed-dau	Lips.
Eghu-ai.....	Teeth.
Eth-aw-dai	Tongue.
Be-daw-ko-net-then	Beard.
Eck-ko.....	Neck.

Egho-chin-na	Shoulder.
Etsa-thunna	Elbow.
Egho-nai	Arm.
Ellaw.....	Hand.
Ellaw-thun-na	Fingers.
Ellaw-ghon-nai	Nails.
To-yea	Breast.
Em-bedd	Belly.
Et-twa-zais	Back.
Eck-keh	Feet.
E-gote	Knee.
Ez-zee-ai	Heart.
Et-zu-et-Thun-nai	Stomach.
Ed-del-la	Blood.
To-yee	Milk.
Eth-thith	Skin.
Et-thin.....	Meat.
Et-thun-nai.....	Bones.
E-dee-thaw	Hearing.
Yea-hee	Seeing.
Thlah-thlee.....	Tasting.
Thlet-tsin	Smelling.
Bet-zaw-dad-zid	Touching.
Dzef-zee.....	Scream, voice.
Ghof-sai.....	Talking.
Yaw-son-dethaw	Noise.
Au-zel	Crying.
Naw-el-tlo	Laughter.
Yeh-eece	Sneezing.
Ed-ai-dzid	Scratching.
Tau-dell-oon.....	Trembling.
Eh-ghin.....	Singing.
Nin-ai-hee.....	Sighing.

Ouda-cheece.....	Whistling.
Tset-hee.....	Lying down.
Naut-zai-thid.....	Standing.
Tset-daw	Sitting.
Tsai-kou-yais-awn-tset-del-hé.....	A widow.
Beh-ghen-naw	Life or living.
Den-na-zee	Man's body.
Be-gon-aw-tlau	Go for it.
Noote-hey	To sleep.
Nawte-set-hey.....	Dreaming.
Yawt-zet-tlee	Jumping.
Ket-hai-zet-eeen-nai	Running.
Oote-hoon	Holding.
Ghon-ed-daw-degh-yea	Love.
Be-cou-ded-tlaw.....	Hate.
In-nee-nez-ouh.....	Glad.
Sho-ghaw-ou-cjaw	Joy.
Aw-nee-dai-thi	Sorrow.
El-ly-ghai	Pain.
Taw-oo-yea.....	Name.
Bau-ghan-naw-thet-he	Trouble.
Ko-thlai.....	Work.
Ko-dzu-det-dee-a.....	Lazy.
Cin-ny	I.
Nin-ny.....	Thou.
Ou-win ny	Ye, he.
Naw-han-ny.....	We.
Ou-aw-not-zed-dai.....	They.
Shey-ot-he.....	To eat.
Et-tsu-tsai	To drink.
Ko-tse-ighn-Kauth	To carry.
Aw-dee-Shool.....	Throw.
Nawn-et-tath-ee.....	To cut.

Nau-din-nai-shu	To hide.
Bee-dint-zai	To beat.
Tsai-kou-yea-haw-ee-key	Birth of a child.
Ighnt-thlelth	Race.
Ko-kau-neet-thlau	Marriage.
Neel-tsi	Wind.
Neel-tsi-nawt-thed	Storm.
Ko-dait-hogh	Rain.
Unknown	Soul.
Thlo-nee-thed	Death.
No word for	Age.
Kau-ney-ob-tsin	Youth.
Net-chaw	Big.
Tsu-daw	Small.
Taw-dee-nai-thee	High.
Naw-dee-in-doh-ai	Low.
Kout-lee	Cold.
Ko-koon	Warm.
Ko-nee-treel-ai	Stupid.
Kogh-ye-ohn	Wise.
Nawt-zid	Strong.
Nawt-gel-hubai	Weak.
Dai-zul-ai	Thin.
Dait-hoghn	Thick.
Net-hai	Broad.
Egh-ghawl-ai	Narrow.
Deh-kaw-lee	White.
Den-ai-tes-sy	Black.
Deh-coz	Red.
Dehd-tho	Yellow.
Dihn-ai-tliz-ee	Blue.
Saw	for Sun and Moon.
Thighn	Stars.

Yeaw.....	Sky.
Kot-cill-ai	Fog.
Kghi	Clouds.
Saw-tlou-lai	Rays.
Mangh-caw.....	Shore.
Sheet	Mountain.
Thai	Rock or stone.
In-taungh	Weeds or leaves.
Dai-chin	Trees and wood.
Dai-highng	Thaw.
Eet-dee-ai	Thunder.
Bed-da-koon-nai	Lightning.
Yawth	Snow.
Teghn	Ice.
Koughn.....	Fire.
Yea-Kongh	Day light.
Ink-koz-zai }	Shadow.
Ko-yee }	
Ko-dihn-eet-tlai	Dark.
Dzin-ai.....	Day.
Eht-tleb-gai	Night.
Saw-kaw-ou-hawl.....	East.
Saw-naw-ee-eghn	West.
Unknown	North and South.
Eem-begh	Summer.
Yawth-kegh.....	Winter.
Hau-co-tau-zai	Autumn.
Ko-loo-zai.....	Spring.
None, count by winters and sum- mers.....	Years.
No expression known.....	Time.
Naigh	Earth.
Tghew.....	Water.

Tghew-net-chaw.....	Lake or sea.
Taw-kau.....	River.
No-eb.....	Island.
Eth-aw-ee-keh	Sand.
Ko-tlegh	Clay.
Thlai-ee-quew	Dust.
Ca-dai-kee.....	Hill.
Thogh	Brayet.
Shee.....	Food.
Tsa-dad-ai-yaw.....	Dressed.
Ai-nai-igh	Thief.
Keegh	Bark.
Dai-chin-thow.....	Branch.
Del-lau-kau	Flower.
Ko-laungh	Beast.
Thlou-ai	Fish.
In-naw-ee.....	Worms.
Tsawl-ai	Frog.
Dzuse	Fly.
El-len-tee-ai.....	Ant.
Kaul-ai	Spider.
Thling	Dog.
Tlu-ai.....	Mouse.
Ko-kau	Goose.
Chith	Duck.
Eh-chu-ai	Feathers.
Eh-gez-zai	Eggs.
Eh-to-ai	Nest.
Myn	Hut.
Kou-la-kau	Door.
Kaughn-keh.....	Hearth.
Dai-chin-tai	Floor.
Thiln	Hatchet.

Begh	Knife.
El-lau.....	Boat or canoe.
Yea-ou-thlai.....	Building.
Tsid-dai.....	Blanket.
No other name known for	Clothes.
Ee-ai	Capot.
Thoi.....	Leggins.
Kau-nai.....	Now.
Ko-thait-tsin.....	Before.
Nau-dai-zy	After.
Dai-ye-engh	Here.
Ai-yid	There.
E-hel-lé	Yesterday.
Tsa-ghon.....	War.
E-haw-yawt-zet-hee	Quarrel.
Su-kez	Fighting.
Ko-kole	Spear.
Ken-nen-ee	Guard.
Beb-deet-tlihn	Distress.
Nau-kaw-nai	Enemy.
E-dai-ye.....	Friend.
Ee-ai-deet-ee	Slave.
Bai-kaw-ho-thid-du.....	Chief.
A-deet-tlis	Writing.
En-thling-ee.....	One.
Aunk-ee	Two.
Zaw-ghai.....	Three.
Ting-yee	Four.
El-lau-ke-thee.....	Five.
Et-ci-tau-gee	Six.
Et-ci-ting-gee	Seven.
Tlaw-ci ting-gee.....	Eight.
Kallaw-ko-nen-no.....	Nine.

Ko-nen-ni.....	Ten.
Aunk-ee-ko-nen-no.....	Twenty.
Taw-ghee-ko-nen-no	Thirty.
Ting-ghee-ko-nen-no.....	Forty.
Ninni-they	You begin.
Eh-kou-daw	Ended.
Tlegh-hé	Yes.
Heel-ai	No.
Tow-an-nee.....	How.
Et-law-ho	When.
Tin-nai-tee	Where.
Yea-dil-tee	What.
Mea-dee	Who.
Did di-zin-na	To-day.
Sa-chongh-ai	To-morrow.
Nehl-he	Look.
Nin-ni-net-ci.....	Yours.
Et-lau-ee-taw.....	With what.
Ko-yau-gai	Under.
Ko-dau-gai	Upon.

This, dear sir, is an authentic account of this country and its inhabitants with a few hints on some Indians who are not under its immediate dependency, upon which I might have enlarged had not the scarcity of paper obliged me to put an end to my letter.

If I attempted this imperfect description it was not with a view of gaining praise to myself or giving information to you, sir, but as I have already observed, to show with what readiness I should always attend your wishes. But were I to declare in favor of this undertaking of which you are pleased to desire my opinion (1), I would abuse your confidence and commit an

(1) Mr. Roderick McKenzie had the intention of publishing a History of the North-West Company ; see : "Reminiscences."

act of violence against my own sentiments. I conceive that many disadvantages must naturally arise to the detriment of trade and injurious to the true welfare of the Company from its publication. Contentions will revive, and commerce already hurt, will then be ruined; swarms of adventurers will, I fear, inundate the North. Those whose rewards are still buried under the mole of a beaver lodge, or wandering over the remote deserts of the country, will then but too severely feel its effects.

The restlessness of people's ambitious notions of the treasures of the North-West will again revive, and enterprising geniuses are too frequently exhibited in these times for us Norwegians to enjoy the sweets of peace for any length of time. Besides, this publication, when handled with a masterly pen, will at once furnish them with a guide, an interpreter and a preceptor, not to mention the immediate advantages which will accrue to them by the accuracy of the descriptions of places the most likely to obtain subsistence from, and most favorable to traders.

I could add many others of a like nature which must infallibly occur to any person concerned who reflects on the late contests between the North-West Company and the X. Y. Company under the consequences of which the interests of commerce and those of the companies still groan, and from which it will be some time before we recover.

However, as I am somewhat doubtful about my own judgment which I do not believe infallible, I submit these considerations to your better judgment and experience, hoping that my doubts and fears with respect to its consequences may be as groundless as my ardent desire to deserve your confidence and esteem is sincere. Being at the same time with deference and respect,

Dear Sir,

Your most devoted and humble servant,

FERD. WENTZEL.

LETTER No. 4.

McKenzie River, April 30th, 1811.

Mr. McKenzie,

Dear Sir,

Depending entirely on your generosity for forgiveness in not writing so fully as might have been expected from a person buried as we are in this country, I beg leave to state briefly that I am gratefully sensible of your kindness towards me and hope for a continuance of your good will.

Starvation. This last winter has been the most melancholy and most disastrous that could ever have befallen to any one single man to support without becoming torpidly stupid or totally senseless. (1) Our distresses and sufferings have been so great, that, of four Christians who were left at this establishment last Fall, I am the only survivor, and in a state more easily conceived than described, when I inform you that, from the 13th of December 1810 to the 12th January, we knew, nor saw any kind of meat but dressed moose deer skins and green parchment skins. At this date we received only seven plues (2) of fresh meat and were upon this little supply no less than eight mouths, of course it was but two meals.

From that period to the 11th of March, we lived upon nothing else but dried beaver skins; our number was then increased to thirteen, and fifteen during the space of twenty-two days. We destroyed in order to keep ourselves alive upward of three

(1) See : Mr. Keith's letter, 5th January, 1812, from Great Bear Lake.

(2) The value of seven beaver skins.

hundred beaver skins besides a few lynx and otter skins. Since that time to the present day we have a meal now and then ; at intervals we are still two or three days without anything. All my men are dead of starvation, viz: Louis LeMai dit Poudrier and one of his children, François Pilon and William Henry, my hunter.

I am unable to describe my own position ; all my Indians have starved more or less ; from one small band only, I received news yesterday evening that five were dead of hunger ; but of the majority of the Natives, I have not heard of since the month of November, they were already at that period gnawing the clothing they had upon themselves.

Hares have totally failed throughout all parts of the country and large cattle (1) have been uncommonly scarce at this place in particular, and the cold has been, this winter, the severest I have ever yet known. The ice on the Grand River is no less than four and a half to five feet thick, and at this late date none of the snow has yet disappeared in the woods.

My own position is yet precarious tho' I support my feelings in reflecting that no blame can attach to me ; these thoughts are my only comfort. I am quite alone at the Fort, not even an animal to keep me company. Such are the vicissitudes of fickle fortune ! a place where I had never great cause to complain ! But, to use an Indian phrase, *Cooloo*, (2) I am still alive, why should I complain.

Music in
the North-
West.

Could I persuade myself that my little friend Johnny (3) would recollect me, I should request a few new tunes of him

(1) Large game.

(2) *Cooloo*, "it is indifferent," "*qu'importe*."

(3) Mr. John McKenzie, son of the Hon. Roderic McKenzie, Lieutenant in the Canadian Fencibles and for many years post-master at Terrebonne. One of his daughters still lives in Terrebonne ; another is married to Mr. Mercil, teller in the *Banque du Peuple* at Montreal.

for which I would make any return in my power. I have some music to which he is welcome by only sending a note, for I have entirely given up the flute and only scrape, now and then, on the fiddle. I beg you will please remember me to him; were I a better scholar I would offer myself to begin an acquaintance by letter with him, but I know my inability. I am an Indian, he is a Christian, he will not like such a rough correspondent...

.....

Remaining with the utmost respect,

Your most obedient tho' feeble servant,

WILL. FERD. WENTZEL.

LETTER No. 5.

MacKenzie River, Department Great Bear Lake,

February 28th, 1814.

Mr. MacKenzie,

Dear Sir,

The affairs of the Concern in this Department are yet much on the same footing they were the preceding year; the appearances of returns last Fall throughout all Athabaska were, however, rather more promising, (particularly in this quarter where we expect a good increase), considering the melancholy destruction of the principal establishment last winter. We are at present convinced that the Indians trading there were the perpetrators of that disaster (1). Some proposals were made among the Gentlemen Proprietors to retaliate, but it proceeded no further.

Dissatisfied
Indians.

Athabaska itself is in fact dwindling down to nothing. The Indians complain of the want of beaver, (the Iroquois having ruined the country) (2), and they formed a conspiracy last Spring to massacre all the Whites of Fort Chipewean and Big Island, in the Peace River, as well as Moose Deer Island Establishment at Slave Lake. The Chipewean tribe appears to have been the first instigators, and altho' the affair seems to have been laid

(1) The destruction of Fort Nelson; see Mr. Keith's letter of the 15th January, 1814.

(2) The North-Westerns often took up Iroquois Indians with them as hunters, to provide the trading posts with game. These Indians having no interest in the country hunted recklessly and at all seasons, and were much disliked in the North-West.

aside and forgotten, still we are alive to the most painful apprehensions for the safety of our lives. In this quarter, about the same time, the Loucheux (1) were near creating an uproar at Fort Good Hope on account of a deficiency in beads at the Fort; yet it would appear the Concern did not consult their own interest with the care required. For two successive years, a pressing demand had been made for beads, it being well understood that the Loucheux tribe would scarcely trade anything else, and for the want of this, their favorite article, they preferred taking back to their tents the peltries they had brought to trade; this neglect must necessarily diminish the amount of returns. These Indians are moreover very clamourous and much addicted to war and are dreaded by all the surrounding tribes, except the Esquimaux: beads however will pacify them.

I have also been informed that the pamphlet respecting spirituous liquors in the North-West, &c., which seemed to be kept a secret in Montreal, had however been given for perusal to a Mr. Sutherland at Cumberland House (a clerk in the Hon. Hudson's Bay Company's service) the very first year it was sent in the North, and that he made several extracts therefrom. He obtained it from a distinguished partner in the Concern. I do not know how far this was consistent with prudence; there was however no necessity for doing it.

Downfall
of Atha-
baska.

Likewise, all the old journals and account books, &c., of Athabaska, of which you had taken so much care while you managed the affairs of the Department, have all been taken to *Lac La Poudre* during the reign of Mr. Arch: Normand McLeod and left there, for what purpose it is not easy to tell, but when I was on my

(1) The *Loucheux* or *Querelleux* Indians inhabited to the west of, and near the lower part of MacKenzie River. They were very shy and quick sighted, which made the *Voyageurs* say that they could see on both sides at once, and they called them *Loucheux*.

way to Canada two years ago, I saw them laying scattered here and there in the *garret* of the *Athabaska House* mingled with the old useless *agrès* of canoes, some upon the beams, others among the old sails, old kettles, sponges, &c., &c.: pages of different books and journals strewed all over the apartment. I acquainted Mr. McLeod and Mr. Kenneth McKenzie and was desired by the latter to mention the circumstance to you

The Athabaska library is also, I may say, not only neglected, but almost destroyed; scarcely a complete set of books can be found. By these different circumstances a person might be tempted to think with great truth that one thing kept pace with another in the decline of once famed Athabaska, formerly the delight and school of the North. The Canadians, who were ever fond of the place and thought seldom or ever of their native country, are now disgusted at the treatment they receive and gather their money as fast as the squaws gather berries, in order to get rid of the "*S..... pays maudit.*"

Respecting this place, I can as yet say but little, being a stranger and having yet no proper interpreter to get myself explained to the Natives. It would however appear, from what information I could pick up from the Indians inhabiting the borders of this extensive lake, that it is not quite so extensive as Lake Superior, as had been before supposed. There is no such a thing as a river discharging itself from it into the Frozen Ocean Great Bear Lake.

The Coppermine River is about four days' walk from the east end of the lake; and the Natives also affirm that the sea is much nearer to that end of the lake than it is from where Sir Alex. MacKenzie turned back on the Grand River, which they maintain is a large lake which communicates to the sea by a very broad outlet, and not a bay of the Ocean as generally believed by the Whites. They had their information from the *Loucheux*, and these from the Esquimaux who are the second tribe of Coppermine River.

Indians from the sea, or the neighbouring nation to those bordering it. The Sea Tribe are called "Sharp Eyes," from what reason I could not learn, except from the fabulous tradition of the Esquimaux, who assert that they kill people with their eyes just by looking at them.

Hoping I have not presumed too far on your kind indulgence in the foregoing, I beg leave to conclude with my most humble respects to Mrs. MacKenzie and Mr. Harry McKenzie, and remain with gratitude most respectfully,

Dear Sir,

Your most obedt. servt.,

WILL. FERD. WENTZEL.

LETTER No. 6.

McKenzie's River Department,

Bear Lake (1), March 6th, 1815.

Roderick McKenzie, Esq.,

Dear Sir,

.....

.....

The late intelligence from Canada stating the glorious event which had succeeded to the troubles on the Continent of Europe, with the prospect of a speedy termination of hostilities in Canada, has once more enlivened the merry lads of the North, whose congratulations, exultations and, especially, *expectations* on that account baffle all description. Plans are formed, executed and fortunes made in less than three seconds; thus the torpor under which they have so long suffered, with the frown of despondency that wrinkled their brows so many years, has been all at once dissipated by the contents of one single "Herald."

Such is the changeable state of the mind of man! expiring one moment under the tortures of grief and dying the next of joy. But I, who am an *unit* of the unfortunate, can little participate in the fanciful hopes of ever becoming a sharer in the concerns of that Company to whose services I have already dedicated sixteen years of my youthful days. I therefore can

(1) Now, Fort Franklin.

only be a silent observer, without enjoying the good fortune of those whose endeavours have been more successful.

When I was at Fort William two years ago, Mr. William McGillivray assured me that my name should not be forgotten on the list of promotion; but "out of sight is being out of mind." I dare not supplicate the interest of some powerful person in my behalf, being fearful of giving cause of offence as becoming troublesome, tho' I am convinced that some have been advanced whose claims were not superior to my own. No doubt they had the means to "turn the wheel" which I had not.....

The trade. Turning to the affairs of the once celebrated Athabasca department, whose trade has been so beneficial to the Concern and increased by your successful care and management, a person cannot help lamenting its present ruined state. The preceding year, the collective exertions of the whole department did not exceed 380 packs, including the returns of the year before from McKenzie's River.

I cannot account for it, but, by some fatality or other, the Natives have taken a dislike to the Whites, and the reductions of the returns may perhaps be as much attributed to this unfortunate circumstance as it may be to the pretended ruined state of the country. Still, the cry of "no beaver" is the only ground on which the Concern have come to the resolution of reducing very properly the number of posts in Peace River, and very injudiciously relinquishing without reserve the whole department of McKenzie's River, a place which might yet have been a profitable consideration to the Company had a proper plan of reform been tried; it only wanted that to make it beneficial.

The
McKenzie
Depart-
ment
abandoned.

It would however seem as if reforms had no connexion whatever with the economical system lately adopted in all things by the Concern respecting the trade, &c., of the North, so that Athabasca, which once commanded fifteen establishments, will ere

the present gets to hand possess no more than eight, viz : Slave Lake, Turtle Creek, Fort Chipewean, Fort Vermillon, Hay River, Dunvegan, St. John's, and *Pierre au Calumet* in Athabasca River ; being two posts in the Slave Lake, two of Fort Chipewean and four in the Peace River.

Notwithstanding these gloomy appearances *squires* are manufactured yearly with as much speed and confidence as Captains, Lieutenants and Ensigns were in His Excellency Sir George Prevost's time when I was, two yeaas ago, in Montreal.

Craving your indulgence for the length of this, I beg leave to conclude with humble deference and respect.

Dear Sir,

Your most grateful and obedient servant,

WILD. FERD. WENTZEL.

LETTER No. 7.

Fort Chipewean, May 28th, 1816.

Dear Sir,

I duly received your friendly favor dated 1815, for which I beg leave to offer my grateful thanks, and entreat your forgiveness that I should, (for want of time) have been less diffusive this year than I should have wished, or a grateful remembrance for your kindness and generosity towards me would very well justify. Mr. Stuart, who will have the pleasure of seeing you, will testify how much I feel afflicted on that account. Hoping however, from a conviction of having had recourse very seldom to such excuses, that you will overlook this, I respectfully request you will still honor me with a continuance of your correspondence.

Herewith, I have the satisfaction of forwarding one of Mr. Keith's journals (1) containing an account of the unfortunate affair which occurred in the destruction of Fort Nelson: it is correct and I have Mr. Keith's leave to forward it. Next year, I shall endeavour to send the journal which you were pleased to ask me while I was at Montreal. I obtained it too late to copy, otherwise it would have gone with this

(1) Mr. Keith's journal could not be found, but see: his letter 15th January, 1814.

Respecting the late enterprise of the Hudson's Bay Company, in the person of Mr. John Clarke as their superintendent, against the Athabasca department, I request leave to refer you to my letter addressed to Mr. James McKenzie as well as to Mr. John Stuart personally.

Athabasca, tho' unfortunate these many years back, is yet The Hudson Bay Company in Athabaska. worthy of notice; and never, I believe, had the Concern better cause for exultation in the prosperity of their affairs than the success which has attended their measures this year against the formidable opposition by which they were assailed the preceding year. Unsuspicious of contention, without an outfit or a competent number of hands to defend it, Athabaska is attacked all on a sudden by upwards 100 men, 10 clerks and a superintendent bringing in 14 loaded canoes full of merchandise, &c., fit for the Indian trade, and, proud I am to say, as suddenly repels and crushes them for at least upwards a year, and, at the same time, increases its exports.

Four hundred packs have been shipped off for *Lac La Pluie*, while the Hudson's Bay party have not 5 packs in weight in furs throughout the whole department. No less than 15 men, 1 clerk with a woman and child died of starvation going up Peace River, and of four establishments they had formed in the fall, not one could weather out the winter; all were obliged to enter into terms with the North-West Company to save themselves from starving to death. The major part of their goods still remain in our stores, and are to continue there until the month of October and December ensuing.

Such has been the consequence of the infatuated presumption of Mr. Clarke, that, out of his once numerous crew which he brought in this department last Fall, only between fifty and sixty remain, the residue, besides those dead, having gone towards Lesser Slave Lake and *Fort des Prairies*, where they are

scattered in all directions. Only four out of the fourteen canoes he brought in are gone out.

Having nothing more worthy of notice to add, I beg leave to conclude with most respectful sentiments of regard to Mrs. McKenzie and my little friend, Master Alexander. (1)

Remaining with gratitude and respect,

Dear Sir,

Your grateful and most obedient servant,

WILD. FERD. WENTZEL.

(1) Hon. Roderic McKenzie's eldest son.

LETTER No. 8.

Lac La Pluie, August 4th, 1818.

Dear Sir,

.....

Since my arrival at this place, I have hardly had time to think about any thing, having constantly been employed in giving out equipments and advances to the Athabaska and Lesser Slave Lake men whose accounts I have closed to-day, so that I am writing this with the utmost haste, being ordered off to-morrow morning for Athabaska.

Respecting the local concerns of the country, it will be pleasing The trade. to you to hear that the Company's affairs appear to wear a much better appearance than could be expected in the present fermenting state of the country. In Athabasca, the returns have turned out better than last year, the produce of the present year amounting to 430 odd packs, making an increase of nearly fifty packs over the preceding year. The Hudson's Bay Company have not even a half pack to boast of altho' the celebrated Mons. De Quoine (1) was their acting agent in Athabasca. *Lac La Pluie* Department however lost thirty-two packs, the Hudson's Bay servant trading that number while Mr. Dean had but forty; this, with thirty pack collected at Green Lake by Mr. W. Henry's opponent, forms the amount of the chartered Concern's returns.

(1) Mr. Decoigne, an old North-Wester who had been long in the Athabasca district and had joined the Hudson Bay Company under Lord Selkirk and Mr. Robertson's auspices.

In Red River, the settlers seem to be taking a deeper root than ever; their crops of wheat appeared fine, tho' it was only the 12th June when I got there. Since that date, three priests have passed here bound for that quarter, besides Mr. Colin Robertson, Peter Andries (?), &c., with a number of clerks and fourteen canoes. We are informed here that the former and latter are bound for the Athabasca so that there is every likelihood of a strong struggle this ensuing season; but every one here seems to behold this formidable appearance with cool contempt and little care and no apprehensions respecting the probable result.

Mr. John McGillivray retires this year and Mr. John George McTavish goes into Athabasca, where he is to assume the lead in place of Mr. John McKenzie. The outfit is however rather scanty for want of hands to take in the goods necessary for the trade. This has been occasioned by a bungling error of Mr. Rocheblave, (1) the acting agent at Fort William, in consequence of which many sour faces are made, and indeed with just cause, at a moment when the opposition seem to be getting down hearted, a moment which should be seized without loss of time in order to complete what the Company's enemies wished to do themselves. However, every one looks bold and seems not to

(1) The Honorable Pierre de Rocheblave entered early in the North-West fur trade in which he made a considerable fortune. In 1801, he was a partner in the new concern formed under the auspices of Sir Alexander MacKenzie, then commonly called the X. Y. Company, and superintended its interests in the Athabaska region. He became one of the most influential members of the North-West Company after the coalition of 1804 and was, in 1818, at Fort William, where he had been sent the year before to procure the arrest of Lord Selkirk for his illegal seizure of the Company's property and his forcible entrance into their fort.

After leaving the North-West, Mr. de Rocheblave devoted much of his time to public affairs. He was elected to the Legislative Assembly for the City of Montreal, and afterwards appointed to the Legislative and Executive Councils of Lower Canada. He also held the position of Commissioner for the civil erection of parishes.

Mr. de Rocheblave married Miss Elmire Bouthiller and left two daughters: one still living in Montreal; the other, married to a British officer, Captain Willoughby.

dread any advantage to their opponents, which I heartily wish
may turn out so.....

Being with the highest sentiments of esteem and gratitude,

Dear Sir,

Your most grateful servant,

WILD. FERD. WENTZEL.

The Honorable Roderic McKenzie,

Terrebonne,

Lower Canada.

LETTER No. 9.

Athabasca Department,

Great Slave Lake, April 5, 1819.

Dear Sir,

A person unacquainted with the wilds of this country would take little pleasure in perusing at any time the dry details of its concerns, but to you, Sir, who have ever been its patron and shared in an eminent degree the toils and dangers attendant on a long and successful residence in Athabasca, a relation of the occurrences now transpiring in this momentous period cannot be unacceptable. I therefore should deem it the height of impudence in me to make an apology for offering the following statement of events of which I was an eye witness.

Struggles
with the
Hudson
Bay Com-
pany.

Towards the latter end of September, last Fall, Messrs. Colin Robertson, John Clarke, MacAulay, Halcro, attended by a certain number of other clerks, interpreters, &c., with nineteen canoes, containing each five men and fifteen pieces, made their appearance at Fort Chipewean and took up their former quarters in one of the islands in the name of the Hudson's Bay Company. A great mob of the Chipewean being at that time in the vicinity, some families ranged themselves under the banners of these new comers. However, the defection was not very serious. Our people were late in coming in from *Lac La Pluie*; they did not arrive until the beginning of October; Mr. Clarke had already been off for Peace River with ten canoes well appointed.

The settlement and distribution of the outfits necessarily took up much time, and, the season being considerably advanced, our people were stopped by the ice; those of the Peace River, below the falls, and the MacKenzie River brigade, at Moose Deer Island, Slave Lake. Before I left Fort Chipewean, on the 11th of October, Mr. Colin Robertson was brought to the fort, a prisoner, by Messrs. Samuel Black and Simon McGillivray. Several of our men informed that he had threatened to excite the Natives to massacre the North-West Company's servants at Fort Chipewean, and our men refused to do their duty unless he was apprehended and detained in safe custody. This occasioned his arrest and he has been kept confined ever since, but treated with every attention he could expect in such a situation.

In the month of December, we had, tho' not directly, news from the Peace River importing that Mr. John Clarke, in his progress up that way, had partially seized Mr. William McIntosh, and had attempted to break open the North-West Company's stores at Fort Vermillion for a supply of provisions, but had been repulsed by the steady and resolute behaviour of Malataire, one of the interpreters of the Concern. Since that, we have had no other intelligence from that quarter.

With respect to this quarter, we have been opposed all winter by Mr. MacAulay and nineteen men besides a Canadian clerk, but they have continued in *statu quo*, not having even conversed with an Indian, but subsisted by the produce of their nets, not, however, without suffering incredible privations. Thus it may be said that that opposition (at least so far as our information goes) have as yet no solid footing in Athabasca.

McKenzie's River Department having been again assumed by the Concern the preceding year, it produced ninety packs of valuable peltries, and, if the outfit of the present year had not been stopped in the ice, a considerable increase would have

been the consequence. With regard to the general appearance of the returns of Athabasca this year, nothing certain can be said, tho' it is presumed that no considerable diminution will take place on account of the McKenzie's river returns.

Salaries.

The prices of the men's wages have increased considerably; a middle man gets now a thousand livres, Halifax currency, and a *Bout*, fourteen hundred; interpreters, from sixteen to two thousand; clerks, from one hundred and fifty to two hundred pounds same currency. Some of the Hudson's Bay Company's clerks have three hundred pounds sterling, others less, and I believe few have more except those who are styled "Governors," these have five hundred

I beg leave to conclude with deference and respect,

Dear Sir,

Your ever grateful servant,

WILD. FERD. WENTZEL.

LETTER No. 10.

Great Slave Lake,

Mountain Island, May 23th, 1820.

Dear Sir,

I have the honor of acknowledging with much respect the receipt of your very obliging favor of the 1st June, for which I beg to offer my grateful thanks. I had the pleasure of writing to you last year, but the Athabasca light canoe having been robbed at Grand Rapid by a set of desperadoes in the pay of the Hudson's Bay Company, my letters to Canada were seized with the budget of papers going out and, I suppose, are now lying on the table of some magistrate or sheriff's office. This, no doubt, is also the fate of a letter I addressed to Captain John McKenzie and another I had written to Master Alexander. I feel a little sorry on account of the two latter because they were written in a jocose style and perhaps rather too free, however they contained nothing of *treason!* or obscenity.

I hope the system of such lawless deeds will soon meet with its due merit, altho' no fears on that account seem to trouble the Hudson's Bay Gentry, since it is currently reported, and I believe as currently credited, that a *guard* is again to seize persons, &c., at the same place this year, which will perhaps occasion bloodshed again, for I understand our gentlemen are determined to resist such unjustifiable aggressions if any attempts are made to follow up this plan in future. Indeed, I cannot conceive what is the benefit of laws to society when daring persons may evade or act in defiance of them.

The Act of Parliament extending the jurisdiction of the Canada Courts of Justice to the trial of offences committed in the wild parts ought also, I think, to have suggested something to protect individuals residing in the country from violence and oppression. A poor man might live and die a slave before he could find means to convey himself to Canada to have his wrongs redressed. How, also, are we to have satisfaction afforded to us if any of our people are murdered by the Natives? We have no legislature residing in the country to have recourse to; but perhaps I may be told that my narrow understanding is too shallow to comprehend the extent of the Legislature's meaning in the enactment of laws for the Indian territories; that may be, and probably is so, tho' I am still convinced that some may obtain redress whilst, on the other hand, hundreds may be oppressed thereby, an instance of which we have in the late trials in Upper Canada.

No doubt some will say, "why do we leave our country to expose ourselves to such vexations"? that is likewise true, but I believe that if commerce was confined solely to a single province, or even a kingdom, what would the revenue for the support of Government then be? I think loaves and fishes would then be as little sought after as a beggar's wallet is now.

Perhaps I am too free; therefore humbly request you will please pardon the liberty I have taken, and accept the following as an imperfect though true situation of affairs in this country, which I might have stated more correctly at length, if my orders were not in opposition to it, on account of the apprehensions entertained by our people that our letters may again fall into the hands of our rivals, and afford them much useful information, if not likewise handles for fresh prosecutions and more expense.

This consideration requires that I should be more than usually reserved on the present situation of both companies' affairs and

probable issue of returns this year. In fact the Natives are so much disorganized in Athabasca, that if they are in the same train of living in other parts of the North-West, it will not be too much to say that the fur trade is ruined for some years to come. The Whites at present possess but a faint resemblance of that influence which they formerly turned so well to their own emolument and thereby also to the benefit of their country.

How long this contest is yet to continue a subject of regret to every good man is still in the bosom of time, no one knows. The weight of purses may serve to keep alive expenses and loss, and, by that means, lengthen the contest, but, eventually, both parties may find themselves involved in the same ruin, for whichever side preponderates, must remain a long while in possession of the country before they can expect to retrieve their affairs in a sufficient manner to afford them profit, and then, it may be yet a matter of doubt if it will be practicable to bring back the Natives to assume their former habits and industry. It may perhaps turn out that many of the most respectable traders now in the country will be obliged, from age, broken constitutions and other infirmities, to retire before the termination of the existing troubles, or remain to leave their bones in the country where golden dreams attracted them, with the melancholy reflection of having lost their all amongst savage nations and in savage parts. Sad consolation!!!

This has been the fate of the unfortunate Mr. Benjamin Frobisher who had been seized and detained a prisoner by the Hudson's Bay Company's servants at Jack River the preceding year. In September last he made his escape with two of his men, fellow prisoners, and, after undergoing and surmounting incredible privations and difficulties, he found himself so weakened for want of subsistence, that he was obliged, in *Lac Bourbon*, to desire his companions in sufferings to make the best of their way to the nearest establishment, if their strength would allow them, and procure him assistance.

Death of
Mr. B.
Frobisher.

The two men reluctantly left him at *Pointe-au-Lièvre*, in the forementioned lake, and had the good fortune to reach one of the North-West Company's establishments at a place called Moose Lake, in the vicinity of Cumberland House and under the care of Mr. George Nelson who, on hearing of the situation of Mr. Frobisher, immediately sent some of his men with provisions, dogs, &c., &c., to convey him to the Fort. Sad however to relate, his generous endeavours were exerted too late, for his men found only the remains of poor Mr. Frobisher in the same place where he had been left, but in a situation sufficiently distressing to draw a tear from the eyes even of his enemies, for half his body was burned or rather consumed by the fire in the encampment.

The two men interred him on the spot which the fire had thawed and returned to the fort with the melancholy account. They found (and brought to Mr. Nelson) in the pocket of the deceased a kind of Journal which had been kept in pencil on scraps of paper by this unfortunate gentleman and containing a narrative of his sufferings from the time of his arrest until within a short period of his death. This document is now in the hands of Mr. William Connolly (1) who manages the Company's concerns at Cumberland House.

(1) Mr. William Connolly, on joining the North-West Company, in 1802, was sent to the Athabasca District where he married, *à la façon du pays*, a young Cree girl by whom he had several children. After having made a handsome fortune in the service of the North-West and Hudson Bay Companies, he returned to Lower Canada, in 1831, taking down with him his Indian wife and children whom he settled at St. Eustache.

Mr. Connolly, soon after his return, married, at l'Assomption, a Miss Woolrich, by whom he also had children. He then sent back his "Squaw" to the North-West and had her properly taken care of in the Convent of St. Boniface where she died.

The validity of these two marriages was, soon after the death of Mrs. Connolly—Miss Woolrich—tested in the Courts of law at the instance of one of Mr. Connolly's sons by his Indian wife, who brought in an action against his father's estate for the recovery of the alleged rights of his mother consequent upon her marriage which, he claimed, was regular, having been contracted *à la façon des pays d'en haut*.

This *cause célèbre* is fully reported in the 1st volume of *La Revue Légale*, published by Messrs. Mathieu & Germain, of Sorel.

Messrs. A. Shaw and George MacTavish, we have been informed, obtained and took their passage for England last Fall on board of one of the Hudson's Bay Company's ships. Mr. John Duncan Campbell, with a number of other prisoners, *engagés* of the North-West Company, are reported to have been sent to Albany or Moose Factory as a prelude to their conveyance to Canada, in order to bring them before the Courts of Justice of these provinces, to answer the charges the Hudson's Bay Company have against them. Amongst the number of the *engagés* is old Joseph Paul, the famous pugilist.

This, Sir, is one item of the oppression emanating from bench warrants sent to this country by the Attorney-General of Lower Canada, and obtained through the influence of a titled, envious, or rather covetous individual. Thus confusion keeps pace with loss in the country. We are likewise led into a belief that several other Gentlemen and *engagés*, against whom warrants are said to have been issued, are to be seized this spring, on their way out by the Hudson's Bay Company, and perhaps the packs also. It is this circumstance which makes me fear that blood will again be spilled, for our people go out armed and fully determined to defend themselves against such lawless aggressions.

Respecting the Colony in Red River, accounts from that quarter mention that all their crops of the preceding season had been destroyed by grasshoppers, a kind of locust. Nothing escaped the voracity of these insects; wheat, barley, potatoes, all were destroyed, and fire having overrun the plains in Red River, buffaloes had become so scarce that none were to be found nearer than at the upper part of Pembina River, so that the poor colonists were reduced to great distress and want. Some of them have been running throughout the country up to Cumberland and *Lac La Pluie* to obtain seed for the ensuing season.

Famine in
Red River.

Such is the information given by our gentlemen of the Red River concerning this land of *milk and honey*! Forty souls, principally Germans, have arrived at the Bay for settlement; this number will only increase the number of victims sacrificed to the sinister views of a noble impostor. Surely, Government might institute an enquiry into the truth of all these circumstances, I mean the possibility of establishing and supporting a settlement in that country, as well as to ascertain whether the ground is fit for cultivation, and likely to yield subsistence to the number of poor families attracted thither by the plausible and fanciful insinuations of the Earl of Selkirk and of his agents. Certainly, the Legislature could not act a more generous part in support of humanity than rescue so many poor people from untimely death and sufferings scarcely to be believed.

These Colonists imported with them the measles and chincough, which have been so fatal among the Natives, that one fifth of the population of the country is said to have been destroyed all the way from Lac La Pluie to Athabasca, so that it would seem as if Governor Semple, as he was styled, from a presage of what might happen, had prophesied this melancholy accident, when he wrote to Mr. Alexander MacDonell at Qu'appelle, in 1816, that "he possessed means to make his power felt, the shock of which should reach from Montreal to Athabasca." Such is now the state of a country which once seemed to have attracted the envy even of sovereigns.

Sir John
Franklin's
expedition.

It is however with sincere pleasure I turn from this disagreeable subject to one of a more pleasing and interesting nature, no doubt more interesting on account of its novelty, and the noise a scene so new in these parts occasions amongst all classes of people, tho' the intent and purpose must conceal some mystery which may be developed hereafter.

On the 26th of March, the Commander of an expedition equipped by His Majesty's Government in England arrived at Fort Chipewean and delivered a general circular from Mr. Simon McGillivray, a copy of which I herewith enclose and therefore, beg leave to refer to it for the object and other particulars respecting the enterprise. To this letter I have taken the liberty of subjoining the copy of another from F. Franklin (Lieutenant of the Royal Navy and Commander of the expedition), dated 3rd March, from Fort Chipewyan. Both these papers may be considered as public documents on this interesting subject. As they will sufficiently explain the nature and views of this hazardous enterprise, I have only to mention that I have been appointed to settle the Indians required for leaders, guides and hunters to the expedition, in which I have so far succeeded as to have collected the choicest hunters of the Red Knife Tribe, as well as the most powerful leaders and knowing men amongst them.

The route to be taken is yet undetermined, as the Indians have two in view and wait to know which will be accepted by Lieutenant Franklin. I think, however, he will give the preference to that which takes a branch of the Martin Lake River in its way to the Coppermine River. The only seeming difficulty will be on the part of the Natives who wish to proceed by the Red Knife River which falls into Slave Lake, in the vicinity of Mountain Island, on account of its being abundantly stocked with animals, whereas they say the other way is not so plentiful in rein-deer, but yet it is the most practicable for moderately loaded north canoes.

Whatever intelligence I may hereafter obtain of the progress of this expedition, I shall take the liberty of transmitting to you by the earliest opportunity, therefore shall conclude this long tedious scrawl with a hope that you will forgive my presumption in wishing to give an account of circumstances which will be handed to you by abler pens and more official accuracy.

With sentiments of humble respect to Mrs. McKenzie and hearty wishes for the health and welfare of your worthy concerns, I have the honor to remain with grateful consideration and respect,

Dear Sir,

Your ever obliged and most thankful servant,

WILL. FERD. WENTZEL.

To the Hon. Roderic McKenzie,
Seigneur of Terrebonne,
Lower Canada.

ENCLOSURE NO. 1.

(Copy.)

London, May 21st, 1819

To the Agents, Proprietors or Persons
acting for the North-West Co.
throughout the North-West Country.

Gentlemen,

Lieutenant Franklin, of the Royal Navy, being on the point of proceeding under the direction of His Majesty's Government upon an expedition from the shores of the Hudson's Bay to the mouth of the Coppermine River, with a view, as far as possible, to explore the Northern and North-Eastern boundary of the Continent of North America, I have to inform you, that, upon application from His Majesty's Government, I have, on behalf of

the North-West Company, promised that he and his party shall be well received by any of you, gentlemen, whom he may meet or visit in his progress through the interior of the Country, and also that you will afford every facility and assistance in your power for the prosecution of the undertaking in which he is engaged.

Lieutenant Franklin's object is one of a purely public and scientific nature and has no connection whatever with any disputes or territorial claims in discussion between us and the Hudson's Bay Company. He goes out in one of their ships because it is the shortest and most direct route for that purpose, and they have engaged to furnish supplies and means of conveyance for himself and his party throughout the whole of the Interior. His plan will probably be to endeavour to reach Fort Chipewyan this Fall, and to proceed from thence towards the Coppermine River early in Spring.

Now, if in the course of the intended route, or any other which Lieutenant Franklin may find occasion to pursue, he should find that the servants of the Hudson's Bay Company have not the means of furnishing him with the requisite supplies, it is my request and the promise which, on behalf of the North-West Company, I have made to His Majesty's Government, *not* that you should furnish clerks or servants of the Hudson Bay Company with the means of proceeding to any part of the country where they may not have previously succeeded in establishing themselves, *but* that you will, so far as your means can possibly permit, furnish canoes, men, provisions and all the requisite supplies for Lieutenant Franklin's voyage.

His party is intended to consist of two young Officers of the Navy, one medical gentleman and two seamen, besides whom he may probably engage a couple of Orkney men who have been accustomed to live amongst the Esquimaux. My idea was that

for the conveyance of themselves, their instruments and provisions, they would require two north canoes, but Sir Alexander MacKenzie has suggested that one north canoe with Canadian *voyageurs*, and six small Indian canoes, would be a fitter outfit for the route from Fort Chipewyan to the Coppermine River. In deciding any question of this kind and in any other question which may arise, I trust you will afford Lieutenant Franklin every assistance and information in your power, and I trust you can be at no loss to provide such conveyances and supplies as may be deemed the fittest for his purpose. In the event of your having to furnish canoes and men for Lieutenant Franklin's expedition, it will of course be proper that you send with them, an experienced clerk, accustomed to voyaging and to the habits of the Indians on the proposed route. The men must be engaged to attend Lieutenant Franklin for such time and to such countries as he may find occasion to require their services; and for any extra remuneration which it may be necessary to give them, as well as for their engagements, and for the outfits and supplies which you may furnish to Lieutenant Franklin, and which are to be paid for by Government, you will please to take his receipts and transmit the same with accounts of the particulars to the Agents at Fort William.

I remain always Gentlemen,

Your faithful obedient servant,

(Signed)

SIMON MACGILLIYRAY.

A true copy from one by

George Keith, Esq.

W. F. WENTZEL.

ENCLOSURE NO. 2.

(Copy)

Fort Chipewyan, March 3rd, 1820.

Sir,

Mr. Keith has informed me of his intention to communicate to you the arrival of the expedition equipped by His Majesty's Government under my command, and to forward the copy of the general circular from Mr. Simon MacGillivray, addressed to the Partners of the North-West Company. I need not, therefore, I presume, offer any apology or hesitate in soliciting your assistance in promoting our advance and forwarding our pursuits.

The objects the expedition has in view are two fold: first to reach the northern coast of America, and then endeavour to trace its north-east termination. The manner of proceeding to effect these must depend on the information to be derived from the Indians who are most conversant with that line of country. Such men, I am informed, principally resort to Slave Lake, and it is from thence only that guides, hunters and interpreters can be procured to accompany and conduct the Party.

The route which I should prefer taking would be nearly North from Great Slave Lake, and, from the information Beau-lieu has given, I am inclined to hope a passage may be made up a river which falls into the Slave Lake near Mountain Island; from thence, by crossing lakes and portages, into the Coppermine River which communicates directly with the sea; but you will be able to obtain from other men of equal, if not greater experience, positive assurance as to the possibility and practicability of proceeding this way with moderately loaded canoes.

The principal reasons for my writing at present, are to request you will have the goodness to communicate to the Indians generally the arrival and nature of the expedition; to solicit your aid in collecting all the information possible from the different persons who frequent your Fort, and your endeavours to procure guides, hunters and interpreters to accompany the expedition.

Your local knowledge and experience will enable you to judge better than myself what number of these may be required for the guidance and support of the party. The number of men we shall take has not yet been determined upon. I do not imagine, the party, including officers, will amount to more than two and twenty persons, a force amply sufficient, I apprehend, to ensure safety and protection. Nor can it be determined until the Gentlemen arrive here in Spring what number of canoes we may have, but these are arrangements quite independant of the Indians, who will proceed, I am informed, in their own canoes.

Sir Alex. McKenzie strongly recommends that the Indians should be accompanied by their wives as a measure of security, and that the selection should be made of men who had small families. Women too would be extremely useful in preparing skins, making shoes, clothes, &c., during the next winter which we shall certainly have to pass in some convenient and favorable situation near the coast. I should wish therefore that some might be engaged to accompany their husbands for those purposes and receive a proportionate compensation.

As soon as the water opens and the necessary arrangements have been completed here respecting men, provisions, &c., I shall proceed to Great Slave Lake with my present companion, Mr. Back (and there await the arrival of the rest of my party from Cumberland House) with a view of having communication with you and seeing the Indians, whom I hope to meet there;

in the mean time I shall be happy should the opportunity offer of these men returning to receive your opinion as to the route proposed to be taken, or any other information or suggestions relating to the country, or the manner best adapted for our future proceedings which you may do me the favor to communicate.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Signed), FRD. FRANKLIN,

Lieut. Royal Navy and

Commander of the Expedition.

Addressed,

“On His Majesty’s service.

“To Edward Smith, Esquire,

“Partner North-West Company,

“Great Slave Lake.”

(A true copy by W. F. Wentzel.)

LETTER No. 11.

Latitude 64° 28' 30". N. Longitude 113° of W.

Winter Lake, Fort Enterprise, near Copper Mine River.

March, 26th, 1721.

Dear Sir,

Franklin's
expedition.

When I had the pleasure of closing my letter to you last spring, I expected to have had also the satisfaction, in a future communication, to continue the information on the progress of the expedition which had arrived in the country on a mission of discovery, little suspecting at the time that I was destined to become a party concerned in its pursuits and subjected to an order of secrecy, or rather silence, in my correspondence to my friends on some matters connected with the general objects which the expedition had in view. It seems, by the Commander's discourse, to be his determined plan not to allow any intelligence to transpire that embraces *particular points*, until it has previously been approved and ordered for publication by the Right Honorable Earl Bathurst, secretary of State for the War and Colonial Department. Nevertheless, I am at liberty to mention that the party will endeavour to reach Churchill, and, in order to facilitate an understanding with the Esquimaux, supposed to inhabit the sea coast in that direction, two men of that nation have been sent from Churchill and are now with us to serve as interpreters. Our Company consists at present of four officers, nineteen Canadians, one sailor, the two Esquimaux mentioned above and myself. To support this establishment and provide provisions, as well as the management of the Canadians, was

entrusted to me. Six hunters of the Red Knife or Copper Indians have been found sufficient to supply us with the means of subsistence. Indeed it was scarcely possible for people to want where the Rein-deers are in thousands and not difficult to approach; so little skill in hunting does it require that any man who can level a fire arm would live with little trouble or care.

Our house stands on the borders of the last woods, our future march will consequently be directed through a barren country, broken by stony hills, intersected by numerous lakes and deprived of all vegetation, excepting a few crowberry plants and the mosses which afford nourishment to the immense herds of rein-deer that crowd the mountains.

This season is considered by residents in the country to have been very mild, yet in the month of December the thermometer descended to fifty-seven and a half degrees below zero, since that it did not sink below forty-nine. The Officers have visited Coppermine River and report it to be a large stream distant fifty-six miles from hence, and our dwelling is found by observation to be one hundred and thirty-three geographical miles from the borders of Great Slave Lake. The instruments which form the equipment of the party are sextants, two azimuthal compasses, besides pocket compasses, dipping needles and a transit instrument, spy glasses, paints, &c. Each Officer, as well as Doctor Richardson, keeps a journal, all of which must be punctually given in to the Secretary or Admiralty office. As to myself, I keep none, since I cannot be allowed to retain it. Our Commander reads Divine service regularly every Sunday, and all who feel inclined attend. This is a novelty in these parts, and highly merits to be copied by those who reside in the country.

By letters which I received last Fall from Fort Chipweyan, I am sorry to say that serious apprehensions are entertained for the fate of Mr. John Stuart and the Canadians forming his party. He had been despatched from Fort William with three canoes

bound to the Columbia and took his way through Beaver River where he was attacked by some Wood and Meadow Crees who killed two of his men, and two more were missing; four deserted to *Ile à la Crosse* and brought the melancholy intelligence. One of the Athabasca canoes waited thirteen days for further informations, but none was obtained, so that all are still in suspense as to what has occurred to the party. (1) A kind of demi official report is in circulation that the Company have come to the conclusive resolve of evacuating the Columbia Department altogether.

In Athabasca, affairs seem to revive; the Natives are beginning to be surfeited by the rivalry in trade that has been carried on so long, and are heartily desirous of seeing themselves once more in peaceable times, which makes the proverb true that says "too much of a good thing is good for nothing." Besides, the Hudson's Bay Company have apparently relaxed in the extravagance of their measures; last Autumn they came in the Department with fifteen canoes only, containing each about fifteen pieces. Mr. Simpson, a gentleman from England, last Spring, superintends their business. His being a stranger and reputed a gentlemanly man, will not create much alarm, nor do I presume him formidable as an Indian trader. Indeed, Mr.

Mr. G.
Simpson.

(1) Mr. Stuart most probably entered the North-West Company as a clerk, after the coalition of 1804. He was immediately sent to New Caledonia—British Columbia—where he spent the greater part of his first years as "a winterer." He accompanied Mr. Simon Fraser on his voyage of discovery down the Fraser River, and, by his pluck and determination, contributed considerably to its success. Mr. D. W. Harmon, in his book "A journal of voyages and travels in the interior of North America," speaks of Mr. Stuart in the highest terms, as "a warm and disinterested friend."

He was a gentleman well read, and soon attained the object of his ambition, a seat at the Board in the Council Hall, at Fort William. He remained in the North-West after the coalition of 1821 and was Chief Trader of the Hudson Bay Company at Lesser Slave Lake in 1828. He, however, a few years afterwards, left for England, where he died in 1841.

Lake Stuart and River Stuart, in British Columbia, were named after him.

Leith, who manages the concerns of the North-West Company in Athabaska has been so liberally supplied with men and goods that it will be almost wonderful if the opposition can make good a subsistence during the winter. Fort Chipewyan alone has an equipment of no less than seventy men, enough to crush their rivals.

Warrants are flying about the country against Governor Williams, Mr. John Clarke and a number of clerks of the Hudson's Bay Company for their daring assumption of power in the transaction of Grand Rapid two years ago. I sincerely hope they will meet with that punishment which is due for such outrage.

Permit me to offer my humble respects to Mrs. McKenzie and best wishes to my little friend Master Alexander and his brother and sisters, nor am I forgetful of the grateful esteem and regard with which I shall ever be,

Dear Sir,

Your faithful and most obedient servant whilst

WILLARD FERDINAND WENTZEL.

To the Hon. Colonel Roderick McKenzie,

Seigneur of Terrebonne.

P. S.—Perhaps it will be interesting to you to hear that the height of the aurora borealis was measured by two of the officers of the expedition while at Cumberland House. They took its altitude at the distance of fifty miles asunder at stated periods with wooden plummet quadrants, and, by the rules of trigonometry, found it to be between six and seven miles high, from three different observations.

LETTER No. 12.

Fort Chipewean, June 3rd, 1822.

Dear Sir,

Franklin's
expedition.

I continued travelling with the expedition from the 15th of June to the 19th of July, when we reached the hyperborean sea. The Commander immediately proceeded to take observations and found a considerable error in the geographical calculations of Mr. Hearne, who had placed the mouth of the Coppermine river in latitude 69.30, whereas, by the more correct observations of Capt. John Franklin it was ascertained to be in latitude 67° 40 degrees north and 115.00 west longitude.

On our way down Coppermine river, we fell in with three parties of Esquimaux Indians, who, on seeing us, made all possible haste to fly from us and thus avoid an interview, altho' they could not possibly have escaped us, if the measures proposed to obtain intelligence with them had been adopted by the Commander; however, as good fortune would have it, one old man and his wife, from their infirm state, could not make good their retreat, therefore an opportunity offered and was accordingly not lost, of conferring with them, but no solid information could be derived from them respecting the sea coast or the distance we had to travel before reaching Churchill; they were ignorant of such an establishment being in existence.

The sea was open two months of the year; they lived in snow houses during winter, warmed their dwellings with lamps, cooked their victuals in stone pots, made fire with moss, killed no other kind of whales but the black whale, were

successful in their destruction of seals and fish, and generally laid up a considerable store of reindeer flesh and musk oxen meat for their winter support, and, as a proof of their independence in the way of living, tendered us the meat of several *caches* which, unfortunately for us, was so putrid that it was left untouched. This formed the sum total of the information received from this accidental *rencontre*.

Late in the afternoon of July the 19th, in consequence of the Commander's request, I was intrusted with despatches addressed to Government and ordered back to Athabasca with them and endeavour to have them dispatched to Canada by the winter communication. Four Canadians were appointed to accompany me ; the exploring party still consisted of twenty men and officers.

travelled the most part of the way, going and coming, on foot, and after suffering no small hardships and privations, I reached Slave Lake with my party on the 29th of September and continued on agreeably to the tenor of my instructions, until the 25th of October, when I arrived at Fort Chipewean. Here I wintered, and in the month of January had the melancholy account of the death of eleven of the party who had accompanied Captain Franklin ; all starved ! Amongst the number, I lament to say that my friend, Lieutenant Robert Hood, was included. Captain Franklin, Lieutenant George Back and Doctor Richardson, with five men and an Esquimaux interpreter from Churchill, are the only survivors that have escaped to relate this melancholy tale. A disaster.

They had surveyed a line of coast exceeding 540 miles, and after returning 250 miles on their track, took the desperate resolution of crossing the barren lands and steer their course towards Fort Enterprise. This march was commenced on the 31st of August, and it was during this journey, when obliged to wade through snow, knee deep, and unable to find fuel sufficient to thaw their frozen shoes, and without provisions to satisfy the

cravings of hunger on a march of upwards of forty days, that the fatal and truly lamentable misfortune befel the Commander of losing eleven men as above stated, who fell victims to the hardships and privations they had to undergo. This, Sir, is all I am allowed to impart at present. As the Officers themselves are now on their return to England, and go by the way of Hudson's Bay, you, no doubt, will have a more circumstantial and authentic account of all their proceedings, in the publication of their journals, which, I understand, will be printed soon after their arrival in England. Indeed, to confess an honest truth, nothing but the fear of your displeasure could have induced me to address you at this moment, when suffering under a very severe indisposition from cold and nervous complaints.

On that account I humbly beg you will excuse also from entering on the domestic concerns of this country, which will, I am persuaded, be communicated to you by abler pens than I can pretend to.

In conclusion permit me to express my sincere gratitude for your continued kindness to me and a hope that I may not be considered undeserving your future notice.....

Your ever grateful and most thankful servant,

WILL. FERD. WENTZEL.

LETTER No. 13.

MacKenzie's River, April 10th, 1823.

Dear Sir,

Labouring under a severe fit of sickness which has much depressed my spirits, obliges me to beg you will have the goodness to forgive me should I fail in not communicating the intelligence which, I am convinced, would be most acceptable to you, and that I had most at heart to relate, touching the Land Arctic expedition and the new turn which affairs have of late taken in this country. The solitary corner from whence I date the present, has become an object of the most serious consideration of the York Factory Council, and important advantages expected to be disclosed by a number of enterprises set afloat for the discovery of every unknown parts of the mountains. Indeed, such is the spirit and avidity exhibited by the Council, that it is believed these discoveries will be extended as far as the Russian settlements on the Pacific Ocean. A party is likewise to leave Churchill Factory this Spring, consisting of fourteen persons including two Gentlemen, and proceed along the sea coast in boats, and, if necessary, to winter with the Esquimaux with whom they may happen to fall in, and then the ensuing season, to resume the prosecution of their survey and endeavour to come out in Great Slave Lake. One of the gentlemen selected to accompany the party is acknowledged to possess a sufficient knowledge of astronomy to ascertain the longitudes and latitudes of the different countries through which they shall have to travel.

Projected
Arctic voy-
ages.

I hope and wish they may not be exposed to the same difficulties and hardships which proved so fatal to the Land Arctic expedition.

Dislosures
on Frank-
lin's Expe-
dition.

expedition, whose return was clouded by the loss of eleven lives, whilst the surviving officers have left in the country impressions not altogether very creditable to themselves amongst both the trading class of people and the native inhabitants. But it is doubtful whether, from the distant scene of their transactions, an authentic account of their operations will ever meet the public eye in England. It is to be presumed, as they themselves will be the publishers of the journals which will appear, that they will be cautious in not exposing their own errors and want of conduct. In fact one of the officers was candid enough to confess to me that there were circumstances which *must* not be known : however it is said that "stones sometimes speak."

During my travels, whilst employed in that enterprise, I did keep a sort of journal which, for want of paper, I have not yet put in order fit to appear or to be shown ; besides it contains matter that it is not proper should appear at present, unless I had a desire to injure some which it is my interest to conceal at least for a time. One of the officers, aware of this, requested me in a particular manner to remain a year or two more in this country, I presume with a view to let the storm in some measure subside, or, what is as likely, to take advantage of my not being in the way for examination, for in the first stages of our travels, they were very strenuous in their invitation and actually pressed me to consent to accompany them to England, which, on their return, they appeared as anxious to dissuade me from. Necessity rather than persuasion, however, influenced me to remain ; my means for future support are too slender for me to give up my employment, but the late revolution in the affairs of the country (1) now obliges me to leave it the ensuing year as the advan-

(1) The coalition of the Hudson Bay Company with [the North-West Company, in 1821.

tages and prospects are too discouraging to hold forth a probability of clearing one penny for future support. Salaries do not exceed £100 sterling, out of which clerks must purchase every necessary, even tobacco, and the prices of goods at the Bay are at the rate of 150 to 300 per cent. on prime cost, therefore shall take this opportunity of humbly requesting your advice how I may settle my little earnings, which do not much exceed £500, to the best advantage. I have no friend or acquaintance in Canada to whom I can apply with the same confidence; your condescension, Sir, in this subject will be acknowledged with every becoming consideration of respectful gratitude.

In the course of the next winter I shall endeavour to bring up my journal ready, so as to hand it in for your inspection as soon as I shall reach Montreal. In the mean time, with most respectful wishes for the health and preservation of Mrs. McKenzie and family, I beg leave to conclude impressed with the most lively sentiments of gratitude for her kind remembrance and your generosity towards me; obligations never to be forgotten by,

Dear Sir,

Your thankful and most respectful servant,

WILL. FERD. WENTZEL.

LETTER No. 14.

(Private.)

MacKenzie's River, March 1st, 1824.

Dear Sir,

Franklin's
Expedi-
tion.

I have the honor to acknowledge with respectful thanks the receipt of your friendly favor dated in April 1823 and beg you will have the goodness to accept my grateful acknowledgements for Mrs. MacKenzie's remembrance and the humble sense I feel for the favor bestowed on me by the family in general.

Last year I did myself the pleasure of writing to you on the subject of the expedition and I do not remember of writing to any but Mr. James McKenzie so much respecting that expedition as I took the liberty of stating to yourself, therefore was greatly surprised to understand from your kind epistle, that extracts from some of my letters had found their way in the public prints of Montreal. I am sure never to have authorized any thing of the kind ; so far from it that it had been my particular wish to have preserved silence on that head until I could have obtained an opportunity of laying before you my journal and of craving your opinion and advice thereon. I have not seen any of the Canada public papers ; few, I believe, find their way now in the North-West, otherwise should have had occasion to examine the paragraphs touching that subject and have known if they had formed part of my correspondence to Canada.

This much however may be safely said of the officers, that they acted on some occasions imprudently, injudiciously and

showed in one particular instance an unpardonable want of conduct. As to the report of some of the Canadian voyageurs having fallen a sacrifice to support others, it is currently circulated amongst the Copper Indians, and, I am sorry to say, is generally credited in this country. Some of the survivors now in Athabasca give full credit and show a desire to confirm such a belief. Besides, Doctor Richardson has published in the London papers, that Mr. Robert Hood (one of the officers) had been shot by the Iroquois, and that he, Dr. Richardson, afterwards killed the Iroquois by way of revenge for the death of his friend, and that he had concealed the deed, in order to be the first to give the sad tidings to the unfortunate Mr. Hood's friends. This intelligence has been communicated to me by Mr. James Leith, Chief Factor to the Hon. Hudson's Bay Company. I am at a loss, nevertheless, how to reconcile this declaration of Doctor Richardson with what he has written to me on the same lamentable subject, for he tells me that "Poor Hood fell a sacrifice to the hardships he was exposed to"; and in a conversation I had with Lieut. Back in the Spring at Fort Chipewean, when he was on his return to England, he very candidly told me that there had been dissensions amongst themselves and concluded with these remarkable words, "to tell the truth, Wentzel, things have taken place which *must* not be known," alluding to what befel the expedition on their way from Coppermine River to Fort Enterprise.

Last fall, I received a letter from Captain Franklin, dated London, March the 7th, in which he states that he ordered £600 sterling to be paid me for my services to the expedition, and that he intended sending me out his journal by the ship coming to York Factory. I have not, however, heard yet of the ship's news. I am anxious to have the perusal in order to compare facts, and to know whether it would be proper for me to write every thing I know, in my journal, or to curtail some

occurrences which I could wish to do, because I find no delight in exposing circumstances which might be considered *criminal* conduct in one of the officers who has survived and been rewarded. I once had a sincere esteem for him and feel it doubly disagreeable now to accuse him of conduct for which he richly merited to be punished. Besides, his Commander is not unacquainted with the circumstance whose duty it was to have noticed it as such.

But I fear I am too tedious, therefore beg you will pardon the liberty I have taken in the foregoing, for which I have no other excuse to make than the condescension with which you have had the generosity to indulge me on former occasions, a kindness, I hope, I shall never abuse.

Altered
condition
in the
North
West.

Respecting the concerns of the North-West, little occurs that can be interesting to Canada. Furs have lost a great deal of their former value in Europe, and many of the Chief Factors and Traders would willingly compound for their shares with the Company for £1,500, in order to retire from a country which has become disgustful and irksome to all classes. Still, the returns are not altogether unprofitable, but debts, disappointments and age seem to oppress every one alike. Engagés' prices are now reduced to twenty-five pounds annually to a *boute* and twenty pounds to middlemen, without equipments or any other perquisites whatever. In fact, no class enjoys the gratuity of an equipment. Besides, the Committee at home insist upon board being paid for families residing in Posts and belonging to partners, clerks or men at the rate of two shillings for every woman and child over fourteen years of age and one shilling for every child under that age. This is complained of as a great grievance by all parties and must eventually become very hard on some who have large families to support. In short, the North-West is now beginning to be ruled with an iron rod.

Many plans are suggested for exploring the unknown parts of MacKenzie's river, and none have been yet digested, excepting that Mr. Samuel Black is to start this Spring from the upper parts of Peace River with a clerk and eight men and proceed up Finlay's branch and, from thence, to cross the Rocky Mountains, and seek for a large river said to follow this range of heights towards the westward, from whence he is to try and make his way to MacKenzie's river. This plan appears to me to be wild and injudicious, because Mr. Black is unable to ascertain by observation in what latitude or longitude he may find himself in, and when it would be proper for him to desist from prosecuting his travels beyond the necessary limits, so as to have a sufficient time to get to MacKenzie's River. In my humble opinion, I think he should have taken his route down MacKenzie's River and cross the Rocky Mountains, from thence to the river in question and then stem the current of it. This would have afforded him more time as the further he went to the southward, the later the Fall would be. But unfortunately this quarter is less known than it ought to be, and as I intend leaving it this year for ever; I feel little interest in trying to persuade my employers of their erroneous information, convinced as I am of the little attention that would be paid to any suggestions from my little knowledge of the country

Praying your acceptance of my respectful wishes for your health and prosperity.

I remain, dear Sir,

Your most grateful servant,

WILLD. FERD. WENTZEL,

Lac La Pluie, August 4th, 1818.

My dear John,

My departure for Montreal was so unexpected, in consequence of only twenty-four hours' notice from Mr. Thaine, that I could not obtain leave to go and pay my respects to Mr. and Mrs. MacKenzie, and now I am again so occupied that I cannot get an hour to write as I could wish to my friends in Montreal, for I have no less than all the Athabaska and Lesser Slave Lake departments' complement of men to equip and give advances to. Therefore you will, I am persuaded, pardon me for only writing a few lines as an acknowledgement of civilities from you which I shall always remember with secret pleasure and satisfaction.

Priests arrive in the North-West.

You will be surprised to hear that we have now no less than five priests in the country, three of whom are gone to preach the Gospel amongst the settlers of Red River and convert the Natives preparatory to their entering the regions of the Blessed, and I am sure you will join me in wishing them all the success due to their laudable and enterprising spirit. (1)

The colonists' miserable condition.

I have been to that land of promise and saw a great number of philosophers, proselytes to the Diogenes doctrine of stoicism, for the most part of the colonists have their habitations under the ground. Perhaps you will say this looks more like the Esquimaux mode of living; well, let it be so, I am willing, but I must say it is the most miserable condition a man can be

(1) In 1814, the North-West Company applied for four priests: two for Fort William and two for the interior posts, but their application could not then be granted.

In 1818, Lord Selkirk renewed the application and was successful.

reduced to in this life, for I am not one of those who think that existence is sweet in any shape.

No! no! I have not *forgot Miss La F——e*, nor the pleasant moments we have passed together, the thoughts of which now make me feel the miserable state to which I am subjected more acutely than I ever did before, although by seeing me *cracking my jokes* and *cutting my capers* a person might be led to believe that I was certainly the most thoughtless mortal in existence—which I consider a misfortune that I am not.

However let my situation be what it will, I shall always recollect your father's kindness with gratitude and Mrs. McKenzie's condescension with reverence, while I am with unfeigned esteem and regard,

Very dear John,

Your sincere well wisher,

WILLD. FERD. WENTZEL.

(Addressed)

To Lieut. John McKenzie,

Terrebonne,

Lower Canada.

P. S.—Pray write me long and broad next year, and be so good as to remember me to our acquaintances at Terrebonne, particularly to *l'aimable Demoiselle* and the rough old Doctor Fraser.

MR SIMON FRASER

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE

FROM THE

ROCKY MOUNTAINS

TO THE

PACIFIC COAST

1808

Having made every necessary preparation for a long voyage, 1808, May 22nd, Saturday.
we embarked at 5 o'clock A.M. in four canoes at Fraser's River.

(1) Our crew consisted of nineteen men, two Indians, Mr. Stuart, Mr. Quesnel (2) and myself, in all twenty-four.

At this place the Columbia (3), which is about three hundred yards wide, overflows its banks and has a very strong current. Having proceeded about eighteen miles, we came to a strong rapid which we ran down, nearly wrecking one of our canoes against a precipice which forms the right bank of the river. Below this point, the channel contracts to no more than seventy yards and runs through two rocks.

After running down several considerable rapids, we put ashore at eleven A.M. for breakfast. We reembarked at one, and had fine going with a smooth current interspersed with small islands; several tombs and houses along the left bank. At 4 P.M., we passed a river eighty yards wide, on the right, which

(1) Probably the river known to-day as Nechaco River and flowing from Fraser Lake.

(2) Hon. Jules Maurice Quesnel, son of Mr. Joseph Quesnel and brother of the Hon. Frederick Auguste Quesnel.

On his return from the North-West in 1811, Mr. Quesnel resided several years in Upper Canada where he traded in partnership with a Mr. St. George and a Mr. Baldwin, a relative of the Hon. R. Baldwin. Having acquired a considerable fortune, he returned to Montreal, was appointed a Legislative Councillor and, later, a member of the Special Council and died in 1842 regretted by a very large circle of relatives and friends, who much admired his sterling qualities, his talents and energy.

Mr. Quesnel married a Miss Coté, a daughter of an independent North-West trader and a sister of Mrs. Alexis Laframboise and Mrs. François Antoine Larocque.

(3) Mr. Fraser shared in the common error prevailing at that time and believed this river to be the Columbia. He only discovered his error at the end of his journey.

we named *Bourbonneur*. Here we saw two houses which our Indians called the summer residence of a Nasquitin chief. We landed and left marks to let the Natives know we had passed. We continued our route, and encamped at 6—put our arms in order—gave ammunition to all hands and established a regular watch. We gathered wild onions for sauce.

29th, Sunday.

Cold morning.—We were under way at 4 A.M.; went ashore on an island and secured a bale of dried salmon for our return. A little lower the river contracts into a narrow space and forces its way violently between high rocks; the canoes, however, being lightened, were run down. Here we put three bales of salmon into *cache* and carried the rest through a very rugged country. It was late before we had cleared this carrying place which we called "*La Décharge de la Montagne*," and, continuing with a strong current in our favor, we passed a small river on our left. Its banks are high, composed of clay and sand, and there is a house near the entrance. We soon after came to another river where we encamped at sun set.

This afternoon we observed several houses of the Nasquitins (1). The country around has a very fine aspect, consisting of extensive plains, and, behind these, hills rising over hills. The trees in this quarter are pine, cypress, birch, hemlock, cedar, juniper, &c. At night, flashes of lightning accompanied with loud peals of thunder, and heavy rain.

30th, Monday.

We embarked at 5 A.M. and ran down a strong current. The country all along is charming and, judging from the number of houses we saw, is well inhabited. At 6, we put ashore near a large house where we found a *cache* of fish. After having taken a few salmons out of it and left their value in place, we secured the rest for its owners. We observed some vertiges of horses at this place. A little below, we left a bale of salmon *en cache*,

(1) Nas-Koo-tin, (Harmon).

which caused some delay. This country, interspersed with meadows, hills, dales and high rocks, has, on the whole, a romantic and pleasant appearance.

Continuing our course expeditiously, we on a sudden perceived some of the Natives on the left shore who appeared to be in great confusion. We crossed to the right and landed at a large house. Our Indians then called out to the strangers on the opposite shore, informing them that we were white people going to the sea. A woman of the Atnah nation, who happened to be within hearing on our side of the river, came running towards us, speaking as loud as possible, but our interpreter could not understand her; she nevertheless continued speaking and endeavoured to supply the deficiency in language by signs. She so continued, at times addressing the people on the other side, then speaking to us. We, in the mean time, crossed over, but were still on the water edge when couriers were despatched on horseback with the news to the next Indians, and we only found a man, a woman with three children of the Atnah nation at the campement, all much alarmed at our appearance. Among them we discovered a young boy whose mother was of the Tahowtin (1) nation who understood a little of the Carrier (2) language. He informed us that in consequence of the couriers just sent off, many Natives would make their appearance in the course of the day, and that it would be dangerous for us to proceed before our intentions were publicly known throughout the country. This information, added to the desire of procuring guides, induced us to remain the rest of the day.

In the afternoon, some Tahowtins and Atnaughts (3) arrived on horseback; they seemed peaceably inclined and happy to see

(1) *Nate-ote-tain*: Harmon. They lived on the Nateotin River. Cox, "Adventures on the Columbia," calls them, Talkotins.

(2) *Tacullies*: Harmon.

(3) The Atnah or Chin Indians occupied a region of about 100 miles south and south-east of Fort Alexandria. Cox.

us, and observed that, having heard by their neighbours that white people were to visit their country this season, they had remained near the route to receive us.

According to the accounts we received here, the river below is but a succession of falls and cascades which we would find impossible to pass, not only on account of the difficulties of the channel, but from the extreme ruggedness and the mountainous character of the surrounding country. Their opinion, therefore, was that we should discontinue our voyage and remain with them. I remarked that our determination of going on was fixed; they then informed us that, at the next camp, the Great Chief of the Atnaugh nation had a slave who had been to the sea and which he might probably give us as a guide.

Fire-arms. These Indians had heard of fire-arms, but had never seen any, and they evinced a great desire of seeing ours and obtaining explanations as to their use. In compliance, we fired several shots whose reports astonished them so as to make them drop off their legs. Upon recovering from their surprise, we made them examine their effect. They appeared quite uneasy on seeing the marks on the trees and observed that the Indians in that quarter were good and peaceable, and would never make use of their arms to annoy white people; yet they remarked that we ought to be on our guard, and proceed with great care when approaching villages, for, should we surprise the Natives, they might take us as enemies, and, through fear, attack us with their arrows. Here we lost our swivel; it had a flaw before and, perhaps on account of an overcharge, it broke into pieces and wounded our gunner. This accident alarmed the Indians, but having succeeded in convincing them that it was of no great consequence, they were satisfied.

The Atnah language has no affinity to any other I know, and it was by means of two different interpreters we were enabled to understand it. The men of this tribe are of a diminutive, but

active appearance; they dress in skins prepared in the hair; their weapons are bows and arrows neatly finished. The country around consists of plains well stocked with animals; some of our men who were out hunting saw plenty of deer.

After dressing the gunner's wounds and examining the condition of our fire-arms, we embarked at 5 A.M., accompanied by one of the Tahowtin Indians as an interpreter for the Atnah language. Aided by several rapids and a continual strong current, we had soon performed twelve miles and arrived at the carrying place. Here the canoes, being lightened of half their loads, were run down; the other half was carried by land for two miles through a very uneven country.

The Chief and the Indians recommended to our attention yesterday and who were encamped on a hill to the left, soon joined us and presented us with dried salmon and different kinds of roots; the last, we could not well relish, though highly recommended by them. After enquiring repeatedly for the slave who had a knowledge of the country below, he was at last introduced. To form an estimate of his capacity, I had two oil cloths spread out for the ground of a chart upon which I desired him to sketch the country towards the sea. This he readily undertook, but his endeavours soon convinced me that his stock of knowledge was very slender indeed, for his lines were entirely directed by an elderly man, a relation of the chief, who stood by him. We could however plainly see in his sketch a confirmation of what had been told us of the difficulties of the navigation and, thereby, the necessity of leaving our canoes, with as much of our baggage as we could spare, in order to continue our journey by land.

The Chief, who had been an advocate of our cause, spoke much in our favor to his owu people. He assured us that the next nation were good Indians and would be kind to white strangers. Having given to our new friend a hint that trading

31st, Tuesday.

The guide.

Desire of the Indians for trading posts.

The old
chief.

posts would be established in his country within a short period, he immediately offered to accompany us himself all the way, remarking, at the same time, that he was well known, and that his experience and influence would be found of great consequence to our security and success. Then his brother presented me with a fine beaver skin and a well dressed deer skin, and recommended the Chief to our particular protection. I thanked him for his presents and assured him that every attention should be paid to his relation, and that, besides, he would be handsomely rewarded for his trouble on our return.

When this ceremony was over, the Chief, his slave, and our Tahowtin interpreter having got ready, took their departure, but the last was unwilling to proceed, alledging for excuse that his wife and children would be subject to starvation in his absence; we however prevailed upon him to proceed. At the lower end of the carrying place, we met eighteen men who had come to see us; I shook hands with them; they surveyed us closely, but were friendly inclined. This tribe is extremely fond of smoking and were very troublesome, always plaguing us for our pipes. They make use, in lieu of tobacco, of a kind of weed mixed with fat. The Chief showed us a calumet which had found its way from the lower parts of the river.

We left four bales of salmon in charge of the Chief's brother and proceeded down a strong current through many bad places until late in the afternoon, when we came to a very long rapid which, upon visiting, we found strong and dangerous. It being nearly night, we encamped. It blew a hurricane from the south the whole of this afternoon which rendered our progress slow, tedious and often dangerous; at times, our canoes were not manageable and within an ace of filling or of being dashed to pieces against the rocks. While visiting the rapids, we observed some Indians on the opposite side of the river, but they did not

see us. We inquired of the Chief if the Natives were in the habit of running down this rapid; he said no, as he thought that the whirlpools would swallow up any canoes or overpower any exertions of his nation, but added that his confidence in our superiority over them was such that he would not hesitate to accompany us wherever we thought proper to venture. Being, notwithstanding this profession, apprehensive lest the old man should regret his undertaking and give us the slip in the course of the night, I had his bed made in my tent by way of security. Before he went to rest, he recommended me to have all our guns and pistols in good order in case of surprise from enemies. "Though the Indians," continued he, "are generally good people, still there may be bad men among them who will go about in the dark."

This morning at an early hour all hands were ready and the Natives began to appear from every quarter in great numbers. Mr. Stuart, six men and myself went again to visit the rapid; we found it about two miles long, with high and steep banks which contracted the channel in many places to forty or fifty yards. This immense body of water passing through this narrow space in a turbulent manner, forming numerous gulfs and cascades and making a tremendous noise, had an awful and forbidding appearance. Nevertheless, since it was considered as next to impossible to carry the canoes across the land on account of the height and steepness of the hills, it was resolved to venture them down this dangerous pass.

Leaving Mr. Stuart and two men at the lower end of the rapid in order to watch the motions of the Natives, I returned with the other four men to the camp. Immediately on my arrival, I ordered the five best men out of the crews into a canoe lightly loaded, and the canoe was in a moment under way. After passing the first cascade, she lost her course and was drawn into the eddy where she was whirled about for a considerable

Indian notion of white men's superiority.

1st, Wednesday.

Disaster to a canoe.

time, seemingly in suspense whether to sink or swim, the men having no power over her. However, she took a favourable turn and by degrees was led from this dangerous vortex again into the stream. In this manner she continued, flying from one danger to another until the last cascade but one, where, in spite of every effort, the whirlpools forced her against a low projecting rock. Upon this, the men debarked, saved their own lives and contrived to save the property, but the greatest difficulty was still ahead, and to continue by water would be the way to certain destruction.

During this distressing scene, we were on shore looking on and anxiously concerned; seeing our poor fellows once more safe afforded us as much satisfaction as to themselves and we hastened to their assistance, but their situation rendered our approach perilous and difficult. The bank was extremely high and steep, and we had to plunge our daggers at intervals into the ground to check our speed, as otherwise we were exposed to slide into the river. We cut steps in the declivity, fastened a line to the front of the canoe, with which some of the men ascended in order to haul it up, while the others supported it upon their arms. In this manner our situation was most precarious; our lives hung, as it were, upon a thread, as the failure of the line or a false step of one of the men might have hurled the whole of us into Eternity. However, we fortunately cleared the bank before dark.

The men who had the rest of the baggage in charge perceiving, from these difficulties, the impossibility of attempting the rapid with safety, began to carry, and had immense high hills to ascend with heavy loads on their backs.

Numbers of Natives came to see us in the course of the day and remained. They assured us that the navigation for a certain distance below was impracticable, and advised us to leave our canoes in their charge and proceed on our journey by land to

a great river that flows from the left into this communication (1). The country, they said, consisted of plains, and the journey could be performed with horses in four or five days, thence we should have smooth water to the sea. But going to the sea by an indirect way was not the object of the undertaking; I therefore would not deviate and continued our route according to my original intention.

The Indians seemed pleased in our company; they carried no arms, and this confidence, I suppose, was meant as a testimony of their friendship. There is a tribe of Carriers among them who inhabit the banks of a large river which flows to the right; they call themselves Chilk-hodins. About sixty Indians were present on this occasion, and as many more were on the opposite shore bawling to send for them, but, as their presence could be of no service to us, we thought it more advisable to dispense with their company as much as possible. Chileotin
Indians.

The river had risen eight feet within these twenty four hours; more Indians arrived: all hands were hard at work carrying the baggage and, with the assistance of the Indians and of the line, two of the canoes were hauled up the hill. Seeing the difficulties attending this experiment, we came to the determination of leaving the other canoes and part of the provisions. Mr. Stuart and some of the men agreed to go by land, but on application to the Indians for the horses they had promised, we received evasive answers and passed the rest of the day in anxious suspense. 2nd Thurs-
day.

The Indians having deceived me, I was under the necessity of deranging my plans of yesterday and, this morning, had one more of the canoes taken up the hill, so that all the party might continue by water. We could procure only four horses; these were of service in the carrying place where the road is exces-

(1) The Thompson River.

sively bad, being continually up and down hill and sometimes along the edge of dangerous declivities over which a horse with Mr. Stuart's desk and our medicine chest tumbled and were lost.

The canoes and the other articles which remained, I gave in charge to an Indian who, we were assured, was an honest, good man. The Indians made us understand that within a couple of days more we should come to a plentiful country where the people were hospitable, but having by this time acquired sufficient knowledge of the character of our new councillors, we became more careful, gave them civil answers, but, in all, followed the dictates of our own judgement.

The At-
nahs ;
their resi-
dences.

This is called the Atnah nation ; their country is well stocked with large animals, and they consequently pay very little attention to fishing. In summer, they reside in shades, and their winter quarters, which are built underground, are square below diminishing gradually in size to the top, where there is a small aperture which serves the double purpose of door and chimney, while a post with notches answers for stairs.

Their ap-
pearance.

The Atnah wish to be friendly to strangers. The men are tall and slender, of a serious disposition and inclined to industry : they say they never sing nor dance, but we observed them playing at *hasard*, a game well known among the Indians of Athabasca. They besmear their bodies with oil and red earth and paint their faces in different colours : their dress is leather. They are great travellers and have been at war beyond the *Rocky Mountains*, where they saw buffaloes. Seeing our powder horns, they knew them to be of that animal. They informed us that white people had lately passed down the first large river to the left ; these were supposed to be some of our friends from the department of *Fort des Prairies* (1).

(3) Mr. D. Thompson, who, in 1806, crossed the Rocky Mountains, going up the North Saskatchewan. ●

It was late this morning before we got ready. Last night, an Indian, who seemed to be well acquainted with the river, promised to accompany us, but this morning declined, saying he was afraid of the rapids ; another brought us a pistol which Mr. Quesnel lost yesterday while on horseback ; this was a piece of honesty we hardly expected, though, I must say, that during the whole time we were there, and although many things were let loose and scattered about in such a manner as to afford all opportunity to the Natives, nothing went astray. The Atnahs therefore seem more honest than any other tribe on this side of the Mountains. 4th, Sunday.
Indian honesty.

These Indians do not burn the dead, but bury them in large tombs which are of a conical form, about twenty feet diameter and composed of coarse timber.

At 6 A. M., we were on the water and crossed over to the Indians who were on the opposite side. Here we observed a precipice of immense height a head which seemed to bar the river (1). Continued our course with a strong current ; ran down several rapids, and came to a dangerous one in which the canoes, having shipped much water and having nearly upset, we had to land. On visiting the lower part of it and having found it very strong and full of tremendous whirlpools, we were greatly at a loss how to act. The nature of our situation however left us no choice, we were under the necessity, either of running down the canoes, or of abandoning them : we therefore unloaded and provided each of them with five men.

The canoe which went first having succeeded, the other two immediately followed. The struggles which the men on this trial experienced between the whirlpools and the rocks almost exhausted their strength, the canoes having been in continual danger of sinking or of being broken to pieces ; it was a desperate undertaking !

(1) The " Bar Rock " .

Dangerous
carrying
place.

After escaping this danger the men returned by land for the baggage. This task was as difficult and dangerous as going by water, being obliged to pass on a declivity which formed the border of a huge precipice, on loose stones and gravel which constantly gave way under their feet. One of them, who had lost the path, got into a most intricate and perilous situation. With a large package on his back, he got so engaged among the rocks that he could neither move forward nor backward, nor yet unload himself, without imminent danger. Seeing this poor fellow in such an awkward and dangerous predicament, I crawled, not without great risk, to his assistance, and saved his life by causing his load to drop from his back over the precipice into the river. This carrying place, two miles long, had so shattered our shoes that our feet became quite sore and full of blisters.

5th, Mon-
day.

Fine weather. In the night, the water lowered about two feet; we were off at five; good going, as a strong current with several rapids were in our favor. At 9, we landed at the head of a dangerous place. The river, which is not, here, over thirty yards wide, passes between two precipices and is turbulent, noisy and awful to behold. The carrying place is at least a mile long, the ground rough, but there is a beaten path. The men took five hours to transport the baggage across; we were all much harassed by fatigue.

Portage du
Baril.

Here we found a horn of the Sasyan or Rocky Mountain ram. We called this *portage du baril*. About two miles below, we passed a small river on the right upon which live the Carriers we saw the other day. It runs through a fine country abounding with animals such as *orignal*, red deer, *caribou*, beaver, &c. The Natives make use of horses.

Soon after, we came to a rapid which, appearing turbulent, was visited. We then lightened the canoes and ran them down, experiencing much danger; one of the canoes was drawn into

a whirlpool so strong that it twisted off its stern, but this having happened near the bank and at the end of the rapid, the men were saved and the canoe was dragged on shore, full of water. The carrying place was along the side of a steep high hill and very bad. The country altogether looks wild. Most of the day we had a great run with a strong current and many rapids, some of which were dangerous; we encamped at 7 P.M.

Early this morning I despatched two men to examine the river, but they could not go far. The high hills, the precipices, the difficulty attending *ravines*, &c., rendered walking very painful; a pair of shoes does not last the day, and the men have their feet full of thorns. We embarked at 7, passed on with great velocity, and observed many shades or huts for fishing at the rapids. At 10, we arrived at the falls. Here the old chief informed us that we would be under the necessity of leaving our canoes; we examined the rapids and found them impracticable. Cascades and whirlpools hemmed in by huge rocks offered us a dreary prospect indeed.

I sent Mr. Quesnel and six men to examine both sides of the river for a carrying place; after an absence of three hours, they returned and informed us that there was a well beaten track on the opposite side which was about four miles long, but which passed through a wild country. We crossed over and held a consultation at which it was resolved to examine again the river before deciding on carrying the canoes. Mr. Quesnel and Mr. Stuart were ordered upon this service for next morning and we encamped.....

Fine weather. This morning, according to our plan of yesterday, the two gentlemen, accompanied by six men, one of our Indians, the interpreter and the old chief set out to examine the state of the river; the men who remained were busy mending their things. The mountains in sight were very high and covered with snow; our guide told us that they were the

6th, Tues-
day.

7th, Wed-
nesday.

highest on that communication. The trees were poplars and pines.....

8th, Thurs-
day.

Fine weather, excessive heat all day ; we examined our salmon, which is our only provisions, and discovered we had not enough for a month, however, we were told we could find plenty with the Indians along the route.

About 3 A. M., our party, abating the chief and the interpreter, returned. They had been at the *rapide convert* distant about eighteen miles and saw but one bad rapid on the way. Going out, they kept near the river and had great difficulty, and on their return, they kept on the top of the hills and had agreeable walking. They saw a band of Natives with whom our Indian remained to wait our arrival. About 6, our canoes were put in the water and we conducted them with the line down to the first cascade ; the others were run down, though not without danger ; fortunately the water had recently fallen several feet, otherwise we could never have ventured on these rapids ; after two hours' paddling down a strong current, we encamped.

9th, Fri-
day.

This morning, our men put on their best clothes ; our two Indians having only a beaver robe and an original skin, I gave each a blanket and a *braillet*, so that we might appear to more advantage to the eyes of the new Indians we were to meet at the *rapide couvert*. At 7 A. M., our arms and every thing being in due order, we embarked, and in a few hours after we were at our destination.

They run
the ca-
nyon.

Here the channel contracts to about forty yards, and is enclosed by two precipices of immense height which, bending towards each other, make it narrower above than below. The water which rolls down this extraordinary passage in tumultuous waves and with great velocity had a frightful appearance. However, it being absolutely impossible to carry the canoes by land, all hands without hesitation embarked as it were *a corps perdu* upon the mercy of this awful tide. Once engaged, the die

was cast, our great difficulty consisted in keeping the canoes within the medium or *fil d'eau*, that is, clear of the precipice on one side and from the gulfs formed by the waves on the other. Thus skimming along as fast as lightning, the crews, cool and determined, followed each other in awful silence, and when we arrived at the end, we stood gazing at each other in silent congratulation at our narrow escape from total destruction. After breathing a little we continued our course to the point where the Indians were encamped. Here we were happy to find our old friend the chief and the interpreter who immediately joined our party.

The Indians of this place drew a chart of the river below which represented it to us as a dreadful chain of apparently insurmountable difficulties ; at the same time they blamed us for venturing so far with our canoes and for not passing by land, as advised by the old chief on a former occasion, asserting that this communication, both by land and by water, would in some places be found impracticable to strangers, as we should have to ascend and descend mountains and precipices by means of rope ladders, &c.

I prevailed upon another Indian to embark with us as pilot, we then continued our course till late in the evening, when our pilot ordered us ashore for the night. This afternoon, the rapids were very bad, two in particular were worse if possible than any we had hitherto met with, being a continual series of cascades intercepted with rocks and bounded by precipices and mountains that seemed at times to have no end. I scarcely ever saw anything so dreary and dangerous in any country, and at present, while writing this, whatever way I turn my eyes, mountains upon mountains whose summits are covered with eternal snow, close the gloomy scene.

Our two Atnah and the Tahowtin Indians intimated a wish of going ahead to the next nation, which they call the *Askettih*s. ^{The Askettih.}

The distance, they say, is not more than twenty five miles, or the same from here as the *rapide couvert*. I told them we should decide upon that point to-morrow, when we would have more knowledge of our situation. The weather has been very hot these two days. The water, as appears by its highest marks, has lowered ten feet.

10th, Saturday.

This morning I sent two men to examine the water; at 10, they returned and confirmed the report of the Natives, that the river was impracticable. We, consequently, immediately set to work, erected a scaffold for the canoes and placed them under a shade of branches to screen the gum from the sun; such other articles as we could not carry along, we buried in the ground. This was all done in the presence of the Indians.

11th, Sunday.

They start overland.

This morning we made a second *cache* of such articles as we should absolutely require upon our return, but this was done unknown to the Natives, as our acquaintance with them was rather too slight to merit implicit confidence. By 5 A.M., all was ready and each took charge of his own package, weighing about eighty pounds, of indispensable necessities. The Old Chief assured us that we could not suffer from want among the Askettihs, and that we should be there in a couple of nights. The men hearing this, believed it and thought it a great hardship to carry an overplus of provisions, and therefore insisted on leaving part of their charge; but to this I would not consent and we started.

The path which we followed was along the declivity of mountains and across many ravines, where we experienced a good deal of fatigue and disagreeable walking; yet, generally speaking, we were much better off than we had reason to expect. At sunset we encamped on the side of a small river. Mr. Stuart and myself, still indulging the fond hopes of discovering an opening which would enable us to make use of the canoes, went to visit the main river which we found, as we were made to expect,

impassable. The channel was deep, cut through rocks of immense height and forming eddies and gulfs which canoes could not even approach with safety.

Fine, but hot weather; we passed several long and steep hills ^{12th, Mon-} this morning. In some parts, the road was through a level ^{day.} country, but generally full of pointed stones which greatly hurt our feet; a few green spots could be observed here and there, but few or no trees. About 10 A.M., being tired and thirsty, we stopped near a rock which, from the brushwood at the foot of it, indicated the vicinity of water. Entering this thicket we ^{Saline} observed a substance something like borax, which had a saline ^{source.} or sulphurous taste; a hole being dug it was slowly filled up with a nauseous liquid of which, however, we drank.

All at once, and when we least expected a surprise, seven Askettihs presented themselves before us with their bows and arrows in readiness for an attack, believing us to be enemies, but upon coming nearer, and discovering from appearances their mistake, they laid by their weapons, joined our party and shook hands. We could not, however, understand one another, our interpreter being ahead, but they accompanied us until we had overtaken him. He spoke to them and they went away, promising to return with provisions in the evening to our encampment. We went on and encamped about sunset; some of the men, being much fatigued, were displeased at our going so late. Soon after, our new friends, accompanied by our old chief who had gone ahead to the lodges of these people, joined us and brought different kinds of roots, wild onions formed into syrup, excellent dried salmon, and some berries, also a few beaver skins which were of a reddish colour.

These Indians say that the sea is about ten nights from their ^{One who} village. One of the old men, a very talkative fellow and, as we ^{saw the} understood, a great warrior, had been to the sea and saw "great ^{great} ^{canoes.} canoes" and white men. He observed that the chiefs of the

white men were well dressed and very proud, for, continued he, getting up and clapping his two hands upon his hips, then striding about the place with an air of importance, "this is the way they go."

13th, Tuesday.

This morning, lost some time mending our shoes. We fired several shots to show the Natives the effects of our guns, and set out at five accompanied by all the Natives with two horses; three more horsemen soon joined our party. I asked for one of the horses in order to carry part of our voyage, this the owners declined and left us. Yesterday our guides carried our bundles, but to-day they excused themselves saying they were too tired.

Shaw's River.

We encamped at a considerably large river which flows from the right and which we called *Shaw's River*. Here we expected to find a band of Indians who, being alarmed at our approach, took to their heels; some of the others went in search of them.

14th, Wednesday.

The country through which we passed to-day is the most savage one can imagine, yet we were in a beaten path and always in sight of the river, which we could not however approach, as its iron bound banks had a very forbidding appearance.

The Indians who went to look out for those who had run away returned and informed us that the fugitives were waiting for our arrival at the next forks. Last night, some of the Natives, having remarked that we were not white men but enemies in disguise, gave offence to our old Chief and a serious altercation took place in consequence. They stated that his tribe were their natural enemies and that some of his young men had made war upon them in the Spring. This he readily admitted, but observed that these were foolish young men who escaped without his knowledge. Seeing that the debate was growing warm, we interposed and the argument ended amicably. Then the Old Chief sent couriers ahead to inform the Natives that we were not enemies; not to be alarmed at our appearance

and to meet us without arms, at the same time he strongly recommended to us to be on our guard.

Having shaved we dressed in our best apparel and resumed our march, followed by our retinue of yesterday, but which had recruited as we went along. Having halted, one of the strangers took our interpreter's gun through curiosity, and, while examining it, raised the cock and touched the trigger; one of our men having observed him in time, threw up the muzzle as the shot was going off and thus saved the lives of some Natives who otherwise would have received the contents; such misfortune would have at once put an end to our journey and perhaps to our lives.

When we came to the Forks, the chief men, dressed in their coats of mail, advanced to meet us in order to know our dispositions before we could be admitted into their camp. Our Chief harangued them in his own language; they answered him in theirs, and we were obliged to employ three interpreters on the occasion to settle the affair. These ambassadors are of the Askettih nation; they looked manly and had really the appearance of warriors. They seemed to speak with a fluency which attracted a kind of attention indicative of applause, and our Chief conveyed our sentiments and wishes with great animation. He assured the Askettih nation that we were good people and had nothing to do with the quarrels of Indian nations.

Official reception by the Askettih.

When the conference was over, the ambassadors returned to their camp, running as fast as their legs could carry them. We immediately followed and encamped on the right bank directly opposite the village, being the best position we could find for defence in case of necessity. The Indians, without loss of time, began to cross over in their wooden canoes, and I had to shake hands with over one hundred of them, while the Old Chief was haranguing them about our good qualities, wishing, of course,

some to accompany us part of the journey. In the mean time, we spared no pains to impress upon their minds the numberless advantages which all the nations in that quarter would derive from an open communication with the white people. The Indians brought us plenty of fish, roots and berries. The mountains are still high and covered with snow; the river, we had the pleasure to understand, is navigable from this place.

15th,
Thursday.

The Old
Chief, the
pilot and
interpreter
abandon
them.

Bad weather this morning and we indulged ourselves longer than usual in bed. The watch having gone to rest at day light, the other who took his place did not pay due attention and we had the mortification soon after to miss the Old Chief, his country man the pilot and our Tahowtin interpreter. These useful men insinuated more than once their intention of leaving us, being afraid to continue. They behaved well, and I have reason to regret that they did not give me an opportunity of paying them for their services, but I hope to meet them again on our return.

Here we are, in a strange country, surrounded with dangers, and difficulties, among numberless tribes of savages who never saw the face of a white man; however, we shall endeavour to make the best of it. Some of the Indians who had joined us yesterday forenoon and whom we are now happy to acknowledge as old acquaintances, drew, at my request, a chart of the country from this to the sea. By this sketch, the navigation seems still very bad and difficult; at some distance to the east there is another large river which runs parallel with this to the sea (1).

Fortified
Indian
Metropolis.

After obtaining the information required, we prevailed upon the Indians to ferry us over to the village; having employed but one canoe which had to make three trips, this took up a considerable time. The village is a fortification of 100 feet by

(1) The North branch of the Columbia River.

24 surrounded by palisade eighteen feet high, slanting inward and lined with a shorter row which supports a shade, covered with bark, constituting the dwellings; this is the Metropolis of the Askettih nation (1).

It was not without difficulty we procured a canoe here for our voyage; the Indians after bargaining a good while consented to accept a file and a kettle in exchange; but of provisions, we could only procure thirty dried salmon. After so long a stay I was impatient to be off, and ordered the canoe to be loaded with the heaviest packages; then Mr. Stuart, one of the men and two Indians embarked, but the Indians, finding the canoe overloaded, put the man ashore and continued with Mr. Stuart. I did not relish this arrangement on account of my friend, but he thought nothing of it himself, having merely observed that he would wait for us within a short distance or at the foot of the first rapid. The other men had to carry their own things and the ammunition, the last article we considered too precious to risk out of our sight.

As soon as the canoe had doubled the first point and disappeared, we set off and walked hard in order to join Mr. Stuart and we soon arrived at the place appointed, but the canoe was not there. Alarmed for Mr. Stuart's safety, I continued with augmented speed all along the river side, followed by a number of the Natives, and it was only after travelling a distance of ten miles and coming to an Indian encampment that I overtook the canoe. Mr. Stuart could not make himself understood to his conductors, and was therefore under the necessity of going on at their pleasure. About dark, Mr. Quesnel came up with us, he had left the men encamped two miles behind.

We had seen some of these Indians before. The Askettih dress the same as the Atnahs; they are civil but would not

(1) Near Lilloet.

part with their provisions without difficulty. They have a variety of roots, some of which taste like potatoes and are excellent. Their bows and arrows are neat; their mats with which they cover their shades are made of different materials such as grass, watap or pine roots. We observed several European articles among them, particularly a new copper tea kettle, and a gun of a large size which are probably of Russian manufacture.

16th, Friday.

This morning the men joined us; of the two canoes the Indians had, we could obtain but one, it belonged to a sick man who accepted of medicines for payment; it was in bad order and we lost some time in repairing it. At two we got ready, Mr. Stuart with two Indians went in one canoe; two men went in the other, and I, with the rest, went by land.

Upon our departure, strangers having arrived at the camp, we were called back to satisfy their curiosity; we had to obey, shook hands with them and then resumed our course. About two hours after, we came up with Mr. Stuart; he waited our arrival to inform us that he had passed through several bad and dangerous rapids and that there was a carrying place near; we had to carry every thing for upward of a mile and on a very bad road.

The HaKamaugh Indians.

Here we met some of the neighbouring nation called *HaKamaugh* (1) with these were two of another tribe called *Suihonie* (2), all were exceedingly well dressed in leather and on horseback. They have a great quantity of shells and blue beads, and we saw among them a broken silver broach such as the Saulteux

(1) Called "Yackamans" by Mr. Ross Cox in his "Adventures on the Columbia River." They inhabit, north of the Columbia River, a country watered by a river called by the same name.

(2) Called "Shoshoné," by the same, page 143. They inhabit the great plains to the southward, and are also called Snake Indians, *les Serpents*.

wear. They were kind to us and assisted us at the carrying place with their horses; we put up near their camp.

Here we became acquainted with a man of the Chilkotin tribe who had left his own country when a boy, but still retained a little of the mother tongue; we made a shift to understand him. He observed that he had been to the sea by this communication, where he had seen men like us who lived in a wooden enclosure upon an island, and who had tents for the purpose of trading with the Natives in furs. He gave us a good account of the navigation and consented to accompany us as pilot. Since the departure of our Tha-how-tin interpreter, this was the only man with whom we could converse to any advantage.

At this place I saw a shield different from any I had hitherto seen; it was large enough to cover the whole body, composed of splinters of wood like the ribs of stays and neatly inclosed with twine made of hemp. An Indian who had been out hunting returned with a deer he had killed; we applied for a share of the meat, but he would not part with any. The Chief invited us to his quarters; his son, by his orders, served us upon a handsome mat and regaled us with salmon and roots; our men had some also, and they procured besides several dogs which is always a favorite dish with the Canadian *voyageurs*.

It was 7 A.M. before we could get ready. Mr. Stuart, three men and an Indian embarked in the canoes, the others with myself went as usual by land, but not before I had satisfied the Indians who assisted Mr. Stuart yesterday, the price of whose labour was a knife. In the forenoon we stopped in a camp on the right side of the river, at the same time sixteen families of Indians appeared on the opposite bank. The chief, to whom we owed the articles of yesterday and who was then our steersman, asked us to unload in order to ferry these people over with our canoes; as we could not well refuse this request, we obeyed

17th, Saturday.

and thereby lost some time. One of the strangers had a sword of a tremendous size, made of sheet iron.

They honour their birth places.

We set off and continued until sunset, when we encamped. Here a great number of Indians were collected from all quarters through curiosity to see us. We found them civil and friendly. In the course of the day, while walking, I observed many piles of *sapin* near the road which I took for tombs, but our young men informed us that they were birth places, hence it seems that this nation honors the birth places as well as the tombs of their friends with marks of distinction.

18th, Sunday.

It rained all night, and this morning, the bad weather, added to the trouble attending a concourse of strange Indians, prolonged our stay to eight o'clock. Here we had an eye upon a canoe but the Indians, seeing our drift, send it out of the way. Our interpreter who promised yesterday to conduct us to the sea was either sick or pretended to be so ; he would not understand a word and wished to remain. We considered him, in the main, of little consequence, for I had reason to doubt the information he gave us the day before ; our own interpreter having fabricated a little on that occasion.

At 3 P. M., we passed a camp of Natives ; these were poor but generous, and they assisted us. Here we observed a tomb with a canoe turned upon it and near it a dog hung upon a tree. About sunset, we came to a large camp of Indians where we put up for the night ; about the same time Mr. Stuart and his small brigade appeared. He reported that he had passed several bad and dangerous rapids in the course of the day, our route also was coarse and fatiguing.

The mountains continue to be high and covered with snow (1). The Indians here are a mixture of the Askettih, and Hacamaugh ;

(1) See : Geological Reports 1877-1878, Page 11 of French version. (British Columbia).

they gave us a *siffieu* which was the first fresh meat we tasted since our departure. Roots are scarce, but the Indians gather a kind of moss which they make into paste, bake in ovens and which, though black, we found palatable.

Rained last night, and there was a fog in the morning. The 19th, Monday. Hacamaugh Chief went ahead to prepare the way for us; according to his account, he was the greatest man of his nation. At this place, we saw a great number of snails of different colours and which were the first of the kind I had seen in the North-West.—At 8 A. M., set out divided as yesterday; a mile below, the Natives ferried us over a large rapid river, and I obtained for an awl a passage in a canoe to the next village, a distance of three miles through strong rapids. This was the village of the chief who had left us in the morning. We were told here that the road ahead was very bad.

The Indians of this village were about four hundred souls, and some of them appeared very old. They live among mountains and enjoy pure air, are cleanly inclined and make use of wholesome food. We observed several European articles among them viz: a copper tea kettle, a brass camp kettle, a strip from a common blanket and clothing such as the Cree women wear. These things, we supposed, were brought from our settlements beyond the mountains; indeed, the Indians make us understand as much. A better class of Indians.

After having remained some time in the village, the principal chief invited us over the river and received us at the water side, where, assisted by several others, he took me by the arm and conducted me in a moment up the hill to the camp. Here his people were sitting in rows to the number of twelve hundred, and I had to shake hand with the whole. Then the Great Chief made a long harangue, in the course of which he pointed to the Sun, to the four quarters of the World and then to us; he afterwards introduced his father who was old and blind and carried

by another man, who also made a harangue of some length. The old blind man was placed near us, and he often stretched out both his hands, through curiosity, in order to feel ours.

The Haca-
maugh In-
dians.

The Hacamaugh nation are different, both in language and manners, from their neighbours, the Askettihs ; they have many chiefs and great men and appear to be good orators, their manner of delivery is extremely handsome. We had every reason to be thankful for our reception at this place ; the Indians showed us every possible attention, and supplied our wants as much as they could. We had salmon, berries, oil and roots in abundance, and our men had six dogs (1). Although our tent was pitched near the camp, we enjoyed entire peace and security during our stay.

20th. Tues-
day.

Indian sin-
cerity !

The Indians sang and danced all night ; some of our men who went to see them were much amused. We obtained two wooden canoes with some difficulty ; the Indians however made no price but accepted of our offers. Shortly after, a tumult arose in the camp while I was writing in the tent. I went to the door and observed an elderly man running towards me, but he was stopped by some others who were making a loud noise. I enquired into the cause ; they crowded around me, the Chief spoke, and all were quiet. I then learned that Mr. Quesnel having walked in the direction of a canoe that was at some distance on the beach, the old man in question, who was the owner, thought he was going to lose it.

This affray over, we prepared for our departure. The chief pointed out three elderly men who were to accompany us to the next nation ; in the mean time, I was presented with berries,

(1) Dogs were the most useful animals of these regions ; the *voyageurs* considered them a great relish ; the small kinds only were eaten, the large dogs were of another race, and had a rank taste. Dogs are much used by the western Indians for carrying purposes and can drag from one hundred to one hundred and fifty pounds. Harmon says he has known a pair of large dogs to drag 1,000 lb for a short distance.

roots, oil in abundance. Notwithstanding these tokens of friendship, the impression which the late disturbance made on my mind still remained. However kind savages may appear, I know that it is not in their nature to be sincere in their professions to strangers; the respect and attention we generally experience proceed from an idea that we are superior beings who are not to be overcome; at any rate, it is certain that the less familiar we are with them, the better for us.

I showed to the Indians some trading articles and asked for leather, but none was brought; I gave the chief a large knife and an awl, for which he heartily thanked us. I gave also a few trinkets to an Indian of a different nation in order that he might show them to his friends. These Forks, the Indians call The Camchin River. Camchin, and are formed by a large river, which is the same spoken of so often by our friend the Old Chief. From an idea that our friends of the *Fort des Prairies* department are established upon the source of it, among the mountains, we gave it the name of Thompson River.

At 10 A.M., we embarked; now all our people were once more in canoes. Our three new guides, the Great Chief, a little fellow from whom we received much attention, and some others embarked to keep us company. Aided by heavy rapids and a strong current we, in a short time, came to a portage. Here the canoes and baggage were carried up a very steep hill; the ascent was dangerous, stones and fragments of rocks were continually giving away from our feet and rolling off in succession. One of our men was much hurt by stumbling on one of these Jaokass Mountain. stones, and the kettle he carried bounced into the river and was lost. The Indians informed us that at this place, some years ago, several of their people, having lost their balance from the steps giving away, rolled down to the river in the same way and perished. We saw many graves covered with small stones

all over the place (1). I have almost forgot to mention that, on our arrival at the carrying place, one of our canoes sunk and some of our things were lost, but the crew was saved and the canoe recovered (2).

On the other side of the River, Mr. Stuart, who visited the rapids, observed many kinds of trees different from those we had hitherto seen; he also observed a mineral spring, the water of which was clear and of a strong taste, and the scum of a greenish colour. The mountains continued high and their summits were covered with snow. Two Indians from our last encampment overtook us with a piece of iron we had forgotten. We considered this as an extraordinary degree of honesty and attention, particularly in this part of the world. The chief and his friends went away the moment we had encamped.

21st, Wednesday.

Early this morning the men made a trip with two of the canoes and part of the things, which they carried more than a mile and returned for the rest. I sent Mr. Quesnel to have charge of the baggage in the absence of the men. About this time Indians appeared on the opposite bank; our guides harangued them from our side, both parties singing and dancing all the time. After breakfast, the men renewed their work, and Mr. Stuart and I remained in the tent writing.

Disaster in a rapid.

Soon after we were alarmed by the loud bawling of our guides whom we saw running full speed towards us and making signs that our people were lost in the rapid. As we could not account for this misfortune, we immediately ran over to the

(1) This locality is now called "Jackass Mountain," the gold seekers of many years after having here lost numbers of mules, which rolled down the precipice with their loads.

(2) For a description of the country and navigation of the river from Lytton, at the mouth of the Thompson, to Boston Bar and Yale, see: Mayne's "Four years in British Columbia."—Geological reports, 1871-1872, page 23, and those of 1877-1878.—Milton and Cheadle: "The North-West Passage by Land."

baggage where we found Mr. Quesnel all alone. We inquired of him about the men ; at the same time we discovered that three of the canoes were missing, but he had seen none of them, nor did he know where they were. On casting our view across the river, we remarked one of the canoes and some of the men ashore there. From this incident we had reason to believe that the others were either ahead or had perished. We immediately directed our speed to the lower end of the rapid.

At a distance of four miles or so, we found one of our men, LaChapelle, who had carried two loads of his own share of the baggage that far ; he could give us no account of the others, but supposed they were following him with their proportion. We still continued, and at last growing fatigued, and seeing no appearance of the canoes, we considered it advisable to return and keep along the bank of the river.

We had not proceeded far when we observed one of our men, Dalaire, walking slowly from the bank with a stick in his hand and, on coming up to him, we discovered that he was so wet, so weak and exhausted that he could scarcely speak. However, after leaning a little while on his stick and recovering his breath, he informed us that, unfortunately, he and the others, finding the carrying place too long and the canoes too heavy, took it upon themselves to venture down by water ; that the canoe in which he was happened to be the last in setting out.

« In the first cascade » said he « our canoe filled and upset ; the foreman and the steersman got on the outside, but I, who was in the center, remained a long while underneath upon the bars ; the canoe still drifting was thrown into a smoothy current and the other two men finding an opportunity sprang from their situation into the water and swam ashore. The impulse occasioned by their weight in leaping off, raised one side of the canoe above the surface and, having still my recollection though I had swallowed a quantity of water, I seized the critical mo-

» ment to disentangle myself and I gained, though not without
» struggle, the top of the canoe. By this time I found myself
» again in the middle of the stream; here I continued astride the
» canoe, humouring the tide as well as I could with my body to
» preserve my balance, and, although I scarcely had time to look
» about me, I had the satisfaction to observe the two other canoes
» ashore near an eddy and their crews safe among the rocks.

« In the second or third cascade, (for I do not recollect which)
» the canoe plunged from a great height into an eddy below,
» and striking with great violence against the bottom, split in
» two. Here I lost my recollection, which however I soon re-
» covered and was surprised to find myself on a smooth, easy cur-
» rent with only one half of the canoe in my arms. In this
» condition I continued through several cascades until the stream
» carried me into an eddy at the foot of a high and steep rock.
» Here, my strength being exhausted, I lost my hold, a large
» wave washed me from off the wreck among the rocks and an-
» other, still larger, hoisted me clear on shore, where I remained,
» you readily believe, some time motionless. At length, recov-
» ering a little of my strength I crawled up among the rocks and
» found myself once more safe on firm ground just as you see. »

Here he finished his melancholy tale, then pointed to the place of his landing which we went to see and were lost in astonishment, not only at his escape from the waves, but also at his courage and perseverance in affecting a passage up through a place which appeared to us a perfect precipice. Continuing our course along the bank, we found that he had drifted three miles among rapids, cascades, whirlpools, &c., all inconceivably dangerous.

Mr. Quesnel, feeling extremely anxious and concerned, left his charge and joined us, two men only remained on shore carrying the baggage and they were as ignorant as we were of the fate of the others. Sometime after, upon advancing towards the

camp, we picked up all the men on our side of the river ; the men who had been thrown ashore on the other side joined us in the evening. They informed us that the Indians assisted greatly in extricating them from their difficulties ; indeed, the Indians showed us every possible attention during our misfortune on this trying occasion.

All safe again, we had the happiness of encamping together as usual with our baggage. We, however, had lost one of our canoes and another we found too heavy to carry such a distance. Our guides asked permission to go and sleep at the Indian village which was below the rapids, this was granted on condition they should return early in the morning. Mr. Stuart, in course of the day, saw a snake as thick as his wrist. Small rain in the evening.

Our guides returned as they had promised. Four men were employed in bringing down the canoes by water ; they made several portages in the course of the undertaking, the rest of the men carried the baggage by land. When this troublesome and fatiguing business was executed, we crossed over to the village, where we were received with loud acclamations and were generously entertained.

22nd,
Thursday.

The number of men at this place, I found to be about one hundred and ten. The chief of the Forks and our Little Fellow came upon our arrival and introduced us to the others. I sent two men to visit the rapids, but the Indians knowing of our indiscretion of the other day, and dreading a like attempt, voluntarily transported our canoes over land to a little river beyond the rapids (1). We encamped at some distance from the village. The Chief went ahead to inform the Indians at the next village of our approach ; he promised to accompany us till we had passed all the dangerous places, and the Little Fellow assured us he would not leave us before our return.

(1) Anderson River.

The Indians having invited us to the village, Mr. Quesnel and some of the men went, and were entertained to their satisfaction with plenty of singing and dancing and received, moreover, a present of three dogs, which were most acceptable at this time, as we depended wholly upon the Natives for provisions; they, it is true, furnished us with the best they could procure, but that best was not generally palatable (1).

23rd, Friday.

Rained this morning. One of the men was sick and we perceived that, one way or other, our people were getting out of order. They preferred walking to going by water in wooden canoes, particularly after their late sufferings in the rapids. I therefore embarked myself in the bow of a canoe and went down several rapids. We met some Indians and waited for the arrival of our people who had gone by land; walking was difficult, the country being exceedingly rough and uneven; crossing a carrying place, one of the men fell and broke his canoe almost to pieces.

The Nailgemugh Indians.

The Natives from below came this far with two canoes to assist us; they were probably sent by our friends who went ahead. In one of the rapids, Mr. Stuart's canoe filled and was nearly lost; we soon after arrived at a camp of the Natives, where we landed for the night. They numbered about one hundred and seventy and call themselves Nailgemugh; we met with a hearty welcome and were entertained with singing and dancing, &c.

The Nailgemugh nation are better supplied with the necessities of life than any of those we have hitherto seen; their robes are of beaver, &c. We visited a tomb near the camp; it is built of boards sewed together, and about four feet square; the top is covered with cedar bark and loaded with stones. Near

(1) Berries are, to this day, the staple food of the Indians from Lytton, downwards; see: Geological Report 1871-1872, page 69.

it, on a scaffold, are two canoes, and a pole from which strips of leather, baskets, &c., are suspended. The weather is generally very hot in the day time, but at night it is commonly cold on account of the neighbourhood of eternal snows.

This morning we traded two canoes for two calico bed gowns. ^{24th, Sa-}
^{turday.} Sent some men to visit the rapids and set out at 8 A.M. After going a mile, we came to a carrying place of 800 yards where Mr. Stuart had a Mer: Alt. 126° 57'; we then passed a small camp of Indians without stopping and came to a discharge with steep hills at both ends, where we experienced some difficulty in carrying the things. We ran down the canoes, but, about the middle of the rapids, two of them struck against one another, and one of them lost a piece of its stern, the steersman his paddle; after repairing the damages we continued and in the evening arrived at an Indian village. The Natives flocked about us and invited us to pass the night with them, and we were led to the camp which is at some distance up the hill.

The Indians of this encampment were upward of five hundred in number; we found our friend the Chief, and the Little Fellow with some of our acquaintances from above, and all were well treated with fresh salmon, hazel-nuts and some other nuts of an excellent quality. The small pox was in the camp and several of the Natives were marked with it. We fired several shots in order to show the Indians the use of our guns, some of them dropped down at the report.

The Chief of the Camshine returned this morning to his home, ^{25th, Sun-}
^{day.} but his people continued with us. This man is the greatest chief we have seen, he behaved uncommonly well towards us, and in return I made him a present of a large silver brooch which he immediately fixed on his head, and seemed exceedingly well pleased with our attention. We embarked at 5 A. M.; after going a considerable distance, our Indians ordered us ashore and we made a *portage*. Here we were obliged to carry among ^{Difficult}
^{pass.}

loose stones in the face of a steep hill between two precipices. Near the top, where the ascent was perfectly perpendicular, one of the Indians climbed to the summit and by means of a long pole drew us up one after the other. This work took three hours, then we continued our course up and down hills and along the steep declivities of mountains where hanging rocks and projecting cliffs, at the edge of the bank of the river, made the passage so small as to render it, at times, difficult even for one person to pass sideways.

Many of the Natives from the last camp who accompanied us were of the greatest service on this intricate occasion. They went on boldly with heavy loads in places where we were obliged to hand our guns from one to another, and where the greatest precaution was required in order to pass even singly and free from encumbrance.

At about 6 P. M., we encamped at a rapid. On our arrival, I despatched M. Stuart and one of the men to examine the rapid. From the place of encampment, we observed an Indian on the opposite shore fishing salmon with a dipping net; our Indians having procured one took five salmons which, divided among forty persons, was little indeed, but better than nothing.

3th, Mon-
ay.

exceeding-
wild
untry.

adder
ths.

This morning, all hands employed as yesterday: we had to pass over huge rocks assisted by the Indians. Soon after we met M. Stuart and the man who had passed the night on the top of a mountain and in sight of our smoke; they reported that the navigation was absolutely impracticable. As for the road by land, we could scarcely make our way with even only our guns. I have been for a long period among the Rocky Mountains, but have never seen any thing like this country. It is so wild that I cannot find words to describe our situation at times. We had to pass where no human being should venture; yet in those places there is a regular footpath impressed, or rather indented upon the very rocks by frequent travelling. Besides this, steps

which are formed like a ladder or the shrouds of a ship, by poles hanging to one another and crossed at certain distances with twigs, the whole suspended from the top to the foot of immense precipices and fastened at both extremities to stones and trees, furnish a safe and convenient passage to the Natives; but we, who had not had the advantage of their education and experience, were often in imminent danger when obliged to follow their example.

In the evening, we came in sight of a camp of the Natives whose chief with some others crossed over to receive us. They ferried us over and we were kindly entertained. These Indians are of the same nation as the last, but some men of a neighbouring nation, called *Achinrow* were present.

The Hacamaugh promised us canoes for the next day, and, as they were above the rapid, some of the young men went for them. It being impossible to bring them by land, or to work them down by water, they were turned adrift and left to the mercy of the current, which, passing among many shoals and rocks, might have broken them to pieces on their way down.

This morning the Indians entertained us with a specimen of their singing and dancing. We set out at 6 A. M., accompanied, as usual, by many of the Natives who assisted in carrying part of our baggage; the route we had to follow was as bad as yesterday. At 9, we came to the canoes which were sent adrift; one of them was broken and the other much damaged, and we had to lose some time in repairing them. Some of the men embarked with the things and the rest continued by land to a small camp of Indians, consisting of about sixty persons. The name of the place is Spazum (1) and is the boundary line between the Hacamaugh and Achinrow nations. Here, as usual, we were hospitably entertained with fresh salmon, boiled, green and dried berries, oil and onions.

(1) Spazum was an old Indian Chief who gave his name to the place. "Ocean to Ocean" by Rev. M. Grant.

Haca-
maugh'bu-
rying
ground,

Seeing tombs of a curious construction at the Forks on the opposite side, I asked permission of the chief to go and pay them a visit ; this he readily granted and accompanied us himself. These tombs are superior to anything of the kind I saw among savages ; they are about fifteen feet long and of the form of a chest of drawers. Upon the boards and posts, are beasts and birds carved in a curious but rude manner, yet pretty well proportioned. These monuments must have cost the workmen much time and labour, as they must have been destitute of proper tools for their execution ; around the tombs was deposited all the property of the deceased. When we were ready for our departure, our guides observed that we had better pass the night at the camp, and that they would accompany us in the morning. Sensible from experience that a hint from these people is equal to a command, and that they would not follow had we declined, we remained.

28th, Wed-
nesday.

We set out at 5, our things in the canoes as yesterday and we continued by land. After much trouble by land and by water for eight miles, we came to a carrying place where we were obliged to leave our canoes and to proceed on foot with our baggage. Some of the Achinrow nation apprised of our approach, came to meet us with roasted salmon. At this place, while waiting for some of our people who were behind, I examined a net of a different construction from any I had hitherto seen. It was made of thread of the size of cod lines ; the meshes were sixteen inches wide, and the net eight fathoms long ; with this, the Natives catch deer and other large animals.

The Achin-
row nation.

Continued and crossed a small river on a wooden bridge. Here the main river tumbles from rock to rock between precipices with great violence. At 11 A.M., we arrived at the first village of the Achinrow nation, where we were received with as much kindness as if we had been lost relations. Neat mats were spread for our reception, and plenty of salmon, in wooden

dishes, was placed before us. The number of people at this place is about one hundred and forty. This nation is different in language and manner from the other nations we had passed. They have rugs made from the wool of *Aspai* (1) or wild goat and from dogs hair, which are as good as the wool rugs found in Canada. We observed that the dogs were lately shorn.

We saw few or no Christian goods among them, but, from their workmanship in wood, they must be possessed of good tools, at least for that purpose. Having themselves arrived here lately, they had not as yet constructed their shades, but had a gallery of smoked boards upon which they slept. Their bows and arrows are very neat.

At 1 P.M., we renewed our march, the Natives still carrying part of our baggage; at the first point, we observed a remarkable cavern in a rock, which we found to be 50 feet deep by 35 wide; a little above it, is an excellent house 46 by 32 and constructed like American frame houses; the planks are three or four inches thick, each plank overlapping the adjoining one a couple of inches; the posts, which are very strong and rudely carved, receive the cross beams; The walls are eleven feet high and covered with a slanting roof. On the opposite side of the river, there is a considerable village, with houses similar to the one on this side.

About 4 P. M., we arrived at a camp containing about one hundred and fifty souls. Here we had plenty of salmon cooked by means of hot stones in wooden vessels. Having understood at this place that the river was navigable to the sea, we had, of course, to provide canoes if possible. We saw a number of new ones which seemed to have been hollowed with fire and then polished. The arms of these Indians consist of bows and arrows, spears and clubs, or horn *powmagans*. We saw very little or no

(1) "Spye." Harmon.

leather, so that large animals must be scarce. Their ornaments are the same as those of the Hacamaugh nation : shells of different kinds, shell beads, brass made into pipes hanging from the neck or across the shoulders, bracelets of large brass wire, and some of horn. Their hats, which are made of wattap, have broad rims and diminish gradually to the top ; some make use of cedar bark painted different colours, resembling ribbon for hats.

Both sexes are stoutly built and some of the men are handsome, but I cannot say so much of the women, who seem to be their husbands' slaves, for, in the course of their dances, I remarked that the men were in the habit of pillaging them from one another. Our Little Fellow was presented with another man's wife. There was a new tomb at this place, supported on carved posts about two feet from the ground ; the sculptures were neatly finished and the posts were spangled over with bright shells which shined like mercury, but the interior of the tomb emitted an abominable smell.

White men
from below.

The Natives informed us that people like us had come from below to the Bad Rock, where the rapid terminates, at a little distance from the village, and they showed us marks indented in the rocks which they had made, but which, by the bye, seemed to us to be nothing but natural marks. In the evening, four men went off in canoes to inform the people below of our visit and intentions.

29th,
Thursday.

Lost some time this morning in looking out for canoes, but could not procure any. We embarked about 9 A. M., some of us with the Indians, and some without, just as best suited the Indians. The river here is wide, with a strong current and some rapids ; both sides are adorned with pine trees : the mountains are still high and covered with snow. About 10, we passed a village which was the residence of the last Indians. At two, we came to a camp on an island containing about one hundred and thirty souls ; here we had plenty of salmon, oil, roots and

raspberries. The Natives amused us with dancing, and after losing a couple of hours we went on, followed by several of the Natives.

At five, we came to another camp of one hundred and seventy souls. Here the Natives who had favored us with a passage in their canoes thus far left us and went home; we were, in consequence, obliged to encamp in order to wait for the convenience of the Indians of this place who promised to help us on the next morning. They were extremely civil, so much so that they inclined us to doubt their sincerity: they gave us plenty of sturgeon, oil and roots, not, however, of the best quality or flavour.

The Indians in this quarter are rather fairer than those in the interior; their heads and faces are extremely flat, their skin and hair of a reddish cast, but this cast is owing to the ingredients with which they besmear their bodies. They make, with dogs hair, rugs with stripes of different colours, crossing at right angles and resembling, at a distance, Highland plaid. Their fishing nets are of large twine and have handles of twenty feet in length. Their spears, which are of horn, have also wooden handles of great length. Here we saw a large copper kettle shaped like a jar, and a large English hatchet stamped "Sargaret", with the figure of a crown. The river at this place is more than two miles broad and is interspersed with islands. The Natives.

It was 7 A. M. before we could procure canoes and take our departure; at eleven we came to a camp containing near four hundred souls; here, we saw a man from the sea, which we might, said he, be able to see next day. The Indians of this place seem dirty and have an unpleasant smell; they were surprised at seeing men different from Indians coming from the interior, and made themselves extremely disagreeable to us through their curiosity and attention. The Indians who conducted us during the forenoon returned with their canoes, and, 30th, Friday.

it being some time before we could replace them, it was two o'clock before we embarked.

Continued our course with a strong current for about nine miles where the river expands into a lake. Here we saw seals and a large river coming from the left (1) and a round mountain ahead which the Natives called Stremotch (2). After sunset, we encamped upon the right side of the river. At this place, the trees were remarkably large, cedars five fathoms in circumference and proportionate height. Musquitoes were in clouds. We had nothing to eat; the Natives, who always gave us plenty of provisions in their villages, but seldom allowed us to carry anything away, had followed us in numbers to this place and were all as destitute as ourselves. Though at a great distance from home, they carried no arms about them, from which we inferred that they had full confidence either in our goodness or in their numbers.

JULY 1st, Saturday. Foggy weather this morning; clear at 4, and we embarked. The banks of the river are low and covered with wood; the current is slack, and rugged mountains surround us. At 8 A.M., we arrived at a large village; after shaking hands with a crowd, the chief invited us to his house and served us with fish and berries; our Indians were also treated with fish, berries and dried oysters in large troughs. Our Hacamaugh, commonly called Little Fellow, so often mentioned and who had been so useful to us all along, had, by this time, assumed an air of consequence from being so long of our party and ranked now with Mr. Stuart, Mr. Quesnel and myself.

The Chief made me a present of a coat of mail to make shoes; for this we may thank our little friend who also received a

(1) River Coqualla, at the mouth of which is built the town of Hope.

(2) Mount Baker.

present of white shells. I gave the Chief in return a calico gown for which he was thankful.

The Indians entertained us with songs and dances of various descriptions ; the Chief stood in the centre of the dance or ring giving directions while others were beating the drum against the wall of the house and making a terrible racket. This noise alarmed our men who were at a distance and they came to see what was the cause of it.

The Indians, who had favored us with a passage to this place, went off with their canoes, and we had to look out for others, but none could be had for any consideration ; at last the Chief consented to lend us his large canoe and to accompany us himself.

The number of Indians at this place was about two hundred, who had appeared at first view to be fair, but we discovered afterwards that they made use of white paint to alter their real appearance. They evinced no kind of surprise or curiosity at seeing us, nor were they afraid of our arms, so that they must have seen white people before from below.

Their houses are built of cedar planks and, in shape, similar to the one already described ; the whole range, which is six hundred and forty feet long by sixty broad, is under one roof ; the front is eighteen feet high and the covering is slanting : all the appartements, which are separated by partitions, are square, except the chief's, which is ninety feet long. In this room, the posts or pillars are nearly three feet diameter at the base and diminish gradually to the top. In one of these posts is an oval opening answering the purpose of a door through which one man may crawl in or out. Above, on the outside, are carved a human figure as large as life, with other figures in imitation of beasts and birds.

A house
640 feet
long.

These buildings have no flooring, the fires are in the center and the smoke goes out by an opening at the top. The tombs

are well finished. I observed that dogs' hair was spun with a distaff and a spindle as in Europe, and made into rugs. There is some red and blue cloth among them. These Indians are not so hospitable as those above, which is probably owing to a scarcity of provisions.

The tide rose about two and a half feet; we cast our nets into the water but took no fish, the current being too strong.

This morning we discovered that the Natives were addicted to thieving; they stole a smoking bag from one of our party and we could not prevail upon them to restore it. The dogs in course of the night dragged out from the baggage and damaged many of our things.

I applied to the Chief in consequence of his promise of yesterday for his canoe, but he paid no attention to my request. I therefore took the canoe and had it carried to the water side, the Chief got it carried back; we again laid hold of it, he still resisted and made us understand that he was not only the greatest of his nation, but equal in force to the Sun. However, as we could not go on without the canoe, we persisted and at last gained our point. The Chief and several of the tribe accompanied us.

At 11 A.M., we arrived at a village where we were received with the usual ceremony of shaking hands, but we were not entertained as usual. The houses of this place are plain and in two rows. I received two coats of mail as a present, and will have them made into shoes.

The Indians advised us not to advance any further as the Natives of the coast or Islanders were wicked and at war with them and would, consequently, attempt to destroy us. Upon seeing us slight their advice and preparing to embark, they gathered around the canoe and dragged it out of the water, and then invited us, for the first time, to the principal house of the village. Leaving Mr. Quesnel with most of the men to guard

2nd, Sunday.
Trouble
with the
Indians.

the canoe and baggage, Mr. Stuart with two men and myself accepted the invitation. As soon as we were in the house, the Indians began singing and dancing and making such a terrible noise near the baggage, that Mr. Stuart, suspecting foul play was intended, went to see what caused the disturbance. He found that one of the Natives had stolen a jacket out of the canoe, which, however, on application to the Chief, was immediately returned and all was quiet again.

We then made a motion to embark with the Chief, but his friends who did not approve of his going, flocked around him and were embracing him with as much concern and tenderness as if he was never to return. Our followers seeing this scene of apparent distress between the Chief and his connexions, changed their mind and declined going any further. Even our Little Fellow would not embark, saying he was afraid of Kaway-chin or Indians of the sea. Some of the Indians laid violent hands upon the canoe and insisted upon taking it out of the water. We paid no notice of their violence, but made them desist and embarked without them. They seize upon a canoe.

Proceeding on for two miles, we arrived at a place where the river divides in several channels, when we perceived a canoe following us and we waited for its arrival. One of the Indians embarked in our canoe, with a view, as we thought, of conducting us in the right channel, but we soon remarked that several other Indians from the village, armed with bows and arrows, spears, clubs, were pursuing us in their canoes, singing war songs, beating time with their paddles upon the sides of the canoes, and making signs and gestures highly inimical. The one who had embarked with us became also very unruly, singing, dancing and kicking up a great dust: we threatened him and he mended his manners and became quiet.

This was an alarming crisis, but we were not discouraged; The sea. confident upon our own superiority, at least on water, we con-

tinued and at last we came in sight of a gulf or bay of the sea; this, the Indians called *Pas-hil-roe* (1). It runs in a south-west and north-east direction. In this bay are several high and rocky islands, whose summits were covered with snow.

Misquiamé On the right shore we noticed a village called by the Natives Misquiamé : we directed our course towards it. Our turbulent passengers conducted us up a small winding river to a small lake near which the village stood : there we landed, but only found a few old men and women, the others having fled into the woods on our approach. The fort is 1500 feet in length and 90 feet in breadth. The houses, which are constructed as those mentioned in the other places, are in rows ; one of the Natives, after conducting us through all the appartments, desired us to go away, as, otherwise, the Indians would be apt to attack us. About this time, those that had followed us from above, arrived.

Having spent an hour looking about and examining the place, we went to embark, but found that the tide had ebbed and left our canoe on dry land, we therefore had to drag it some distance to the water. The Natives seeing our difficulties assumed courage and began to make their appearance from every direction, dressed in their coats af mail and howling like so many wolves, and brandishing their war clubs. We at last got into deep water and embarked ; our turbulent guide no sooner found himself on board again than he began a repetition of his former pranks : he asked for our daggers, for our clothes, in fact for every thing we had. Fully convinced at length of his unfriendly disposition, we turned him ashore and made him understand, as well as the other who were by this time closing upon us, that if they did not keep at their distance we would fire upon them.

(1). This word is not very legibly written : it may also be *Pas-hil-rou* or *Pas-hil-row*.

After this unpleasant affair, we continued until we came opposite the second village. Here, our curiosity would have incited us to go ashore, but, reflecting upon the reception we had experienced at the first and the character of the Natives, it was thought neither prudent nor necessary to run any further risk, especially as we were deficient of all provisions and saw no prospect of procuring any in this hostile quarter. We therefore altered our course with the intention of going back to the friendly Indians for a supply, then, if thought proper and expedient, to return and prosecute our design of visiting part of the sea coast. They return for provisions.

When we had come opposite the hostile village on our way back, the same fellows who had annoyed us before, advanced again to attack us with a great noise which was echoed by those on shore. They approached so near that we were obliged to adopt a threatening attitude, and had to put them off with the muzzle of our guns. At last, perceiving our determination to be serious, their courage failed, they gave up the pursuit and crossed back to the village.

The tide was now in our favor, the evening was fine and we continued our course with great speed until eleven, when we encamped within six miles of the chief's village. The men being extremely tired went immediately to rest, but they were not long in bed before the tide washing upon the encampment roused them up.

Having been disturbed by the overflowing of the tide, we embarked early and arrived at the Chief's village at 5 A.M., where we found some of the Indians bathing, as it is their custom to bathe at this early hour; the others who were still asleep soon got up and received us at the water side, but all seemed surprised to see us again. 3rd, Monday.

About this time our Little Fellow, whom we had left at the village below, arrived and informed us that the Indians, after our departure, had fixed upon our destruction, that he himself The Indians determine on their destruction.

had been pillaged, that his hands and feet had been tied, and that he was about being knocked on the head when the Chief of the Achinrow arrived, released him and secured his escape to this place, where he was now detained as a slave. This unpleasant recital served to warn us, more and more, of our danger; still we were bent upon obtaining sight of the main ocean, which was but at a short distance from where we had returned, but unfortunately we could not procure a morsel of provisions, and, besides, the Chief insisted upon having his canoe restored to him immediately; this demand we were obliged to resist.

The Chief invited us to his house and we went, but were not above five minutes absent when one of the men came running to inform us that the Indians had seized upon the canoe and were pillaging our people. Alarmed at this report, we hastened to their assistance, when we found that some of the Indians from below having arrived, had encouraged the others in these violent proceedings. Sensible by experience of our critical situation, and that mild measures would be improper, as well as of no service, I pretended to be in a violent passion, spoke loud, with vehement gestures, exactly in their own way, and thus peace and tranquility were instantly restored.

The expedition
abandoned.

From these repeated specimens of the insolence and ill-nature of the Natives, we saw nothing but dangers and difficulties in our way, we therefore relinquished our designs and turned our thoughts towards home; but we could not proceed without the canoe and we had to force it away from the owner, leaving a blanket in its place. Thus provided, we pushed off. Here we missed one of our men, G. B.; the fellow being afraid had fled into the woods and placed himself behind a range of tombs, where he remained during the greatest part of the time. We stayed on shore, and it was with great difficulty we prevailed upon him to embark.

At last we got under way and had to pull hard against a strong current : Upon doubling the first point, the Chief, with a number of canoes in his *suite* well manned and armed, overtook us, and kept together, signing and exhibiting unfriendly manners. Aware of their design, we endeavored to keep them at a proper distance for some time ; at last, growing outrageous at our precautions, they began to surround us and close in, with the evident intention of seizing upon our canoe and upsetting us. I again had recourse to threats and vehemence of speech and gesture, which again had the desired effect ; the Chief, seeing danger in his design, spoke to his party and they all dropped quietly behind, but still followed and kept us in view. Soon after, a canoe with three men from a river on the left shore came to examine us ; after satisfying their curiosity, they returned. We observed that one of the crew had a large belt suspended from his neck, garnished with locks of human hair. About dark, we observed the war party gain the shore, but we continued all night in order to get to the next village, so as to secure provisions before their arrival. The night was dark and the current strong, yet we reached our destination about 8 in the morning.

Here I must again acknowledge my great disappointment in not seeing the *main Ocean*, having gone so near it as to be almost within view ; we besides wished very much to settle the situation by an observation for the longitude. The latitude is 49° nearly, while that of the entrance of the Columbia is $46^{\circ} 20'$. This river therefore is not the Columbia ! If I had been convinced of this when I left my canoes, I would certainly have returned.

The people of the village were greatly surprised to see us re-^{4th, Tues-}turn and enquired with impatience if we had been to the ^{day.} island, and how we had the good fortune to escape from the

Still pursued by the Coast Indians.

cruelty of the Masquiamme (1), meaning the nations at the sea shore. While we were endeavouring to answer, our pursuers of the day before made their appearance, still bent upon mischief. The leader on landing, began to testify his hostile disposition by brandishing his horn club and making a violent harangue to the people of the village who already seemed altogether in his favor. He claimed his canoe; seeing a number of canoes scattered about the beach, and wishing to get rid of so troublesome and persevering a persecutor, we consented without hesitation. After fixing the baggage and placing guards over it, at the request of a chief, Mr. Stuart, Mr. Quesnel and myself accompanied him to his tent, and were offered with salmon. We were much flattered with this token of his kindness but we were hardly seated and had hardly begun to partake of his bounty, when one of the men came rushing to the door exclaiming that the Indians were unruly and proceeding to violence; we rushed out of the tent, and at our appearance all was quiet again, but we could not feel free of some alarm seeing the whole village assembled around our baggage, armed with all kinds of weapons and seemingly determined upon mischief.

It was then that our situation might be really considered as critical. Placed upon a small sandy island, few in number, without provisions and surrounded by upward of seven hundred barbarians! Our resolution did not, however, forsake us; on the contrary, all were of one mind, ready for action and determined to make our way good at all hazards.

We applied for canoes in all directions, but could not procure any, for any consideration, so that we had to regret the inadvertancy we committed on our arrival by parting with the one we had in our possession, before it was replaced by another. There being no alternative, we again had recourse to the Chief

(1) Mr. Fraser writes the name, both "Misquiamme" and "Masquiamme".

notwithstanding our experience of his former illiberality. He asked his price, I consented; he augmented his demand, I again yielded; he still continued to increase his imposition, but, at length, feeling highly provoked at the impertinence of his conduct, I exclaimed violently in a manner not to be mistaken, he then ordered the canoe to be brought to our party.

We immediately prepared to embark, but when we began to load, the Indians crowded about the baggage and attempted to pillage, but so soon as they laid hold of any of our things, we pulled it from them, and we had to place ourselves in a position of defence and threaten them with the contents of our pieces before they desisted. Having got ready, we crossed over the river. One of the Indians who evinced a friendly disposition in our favor, followed and gave us some fish, at the same time, we observed several of the others embarking and steering their course parallel to ours along the other bank. The canoe being leaky, and some of the men being in want of paddles, we were obliged to put ashore to repair. This done, we went on till ten P. M., when we encamped upon an island; the men went to rest, Mr. Stuart and I mounted guard alternately.

Started early, and at 10 A.M., we arrived at *Pulaghi* village. ^{5th, Wednesday.} Here again we found the Chief of the big canoe with several of his people. Their canoes being small and consequently more easily managed than ours, which was large, gave them the advantage over us in stemming the current. As we had some reason to suspect that these Indians pressed forward on purpose to renew the quarrel and to be troublesome, and seeing the Natives more numerous here than in the last camp, we thought it advisable to avoid them by crossing to the other side of the river. Three men followed us in a canoe, who favoured us with a paddle and with five large salmons.

To convey an idea of the effects of our arms to these men, we fired several shots in their presence and then made them under-

stand that if the Chief should pursue us any further, he would suffer severely for his presumption. They desired us to proceed in peace and that no one would disturb us for the future.

We continued; about sunset two Indians in a canoe overtook us, we knew them; they invited us to their camp which was at a small distance on the opposite shore; this invitation we declined and at dark we put up for the night, all wet. The canoe was leaky, but the bank being steep, high, it could not be hauled up for repair. We passed the night within sight of the camp, yet none of the Indians came near us.

6th, Thurs-
day.

Set out early; soon after several canoes joined; in these we recognized Blondin, the chief that flattered us so much the 29th June, also the two Indians of the preceding evening who gave us fish and who, of their own accord, assisted us in the rapids. Thinking them well disposed, I gave them permission to embark in our canoe; they paddled, but they were not long aboard before they struck up the war song. Perceiving their drift, I imposed silence; a moment after, Blondin got Mr. Quesnel's dagger out of the scabbard and was hiding it under his robe when he was perceived. Seeing their evil disposition, I had them instantly sent ashore. Soon after this, the other Indians made us signs to follow them, but, doubting their sincerity, we pushed from them into another channel and they doubled their speed.

By and by, we discovered a large camp of Indians whose appearance soon taught us that they were not assembled for any good purpose, and when we came opposite to them the whole were in motion. Some were in canoes, others lined the shore and all were inclining our way; at last it was with difficulty we could prevent them with the muzzle of our guns from seizing upon the canoe; they, however, continued to give us such a push with the intention of upsetting us, that our canoe became engaged in a strong current which, in spite of all our efforts, car-

ried us down the rapid. We however gained the shore at the foot of a high hill where we tied the canoe to a tree. Here I ordered Mr. Stuart with some of the men to debark and ascend the hill in order to keep the Indians in awe ; they, perceiving our preparation for defence, retired, but still kept ahead.

I then directed the men who were on shore to embark, but Mr. Stuart came to inform me that they were bent going by land across the mountains to the place where we had slept on the 24th of June. Considering this scheme as a desperate undertaking, I debarked and endeavoured to persuade the delinquents of their infatuation ; but two of them declared in their own names and in the names of the others that their plan was fixed, and that they saw no other way by which they could save themselves from immediate destruction than by flying out of the way of danger, for, said they, continuing by water, surrounded by hostile nations, who watched every opportunity to attack and torment them, created in their mind a state of suspicion worse than death. I remonstrated and threatened by turns, the other gentlemen joined me in my endeavours to expose the folly of their undertaking, and the advantages that would accrue to us all by remaining, as we had hitherto done, in perfect union for our common safety.

After much debate on both sides, they yielded and we all shook hands, resolved not to separate during the voyage, which resolution was immediately confirmed by the following oath taken on the spot by each of the party. " I solemnly swear before " Almighty God that I shall sooner perish than forsake in distress " any of our crew during the present voyage ".

After this ceremony was over, all hands dressed in their best apparel and each took charge of his own bundle. In the mean time some of the peaceable Indians came to pay us a visit ; they inherited our superfluities, and it diverted us much to see them dive into the river and scramble about rags which the

Some of the men speak of deserting.

The oath of mutual assistance.

men had thrown away as useless. By this time it was near sunset: we however decamped full of spirits, singing and making a great noise. The Indians who were waiting ahead, observing us so cheerful, felt disheartened, kept their distance and some of them thought proper to paddle down the stream. At dusk, we encamped on a small island below a village. The two young Indians who had benefited by our scourings encamped with us, but the others did not approach the island.

In the morning, the residue of the unfriendly Indians who had passed the night in the vicinity, directed their course down the current, and we saw nothing of them afterwards. Our Little Fellow and his chief who had slept at the village came over to see us; they informed us that all the people from below were gone. We crossed over to the village where we procured a few salmons and shell fish which were left there by the last visitors. The Indians were few in number and very poor. A couple of leagues further on we came to another village where we obtained a few fish.

By 10 A. M. we came to a portage where we had to carry most of our things and drag the canoe up with a line; a number of Indians were present, they appeared friendly and the old men entered into conversation with us. Our Little Fellow informed them of all he knew about us, he spoke particularly of our difficulties, how we resisted the attacks of the tribes below, and explained to them the nature of our big guns and also of our little guns, of which, said he, our pockets were full. As a proof, we fired several shots, at which they were astonished.

We renewed our course, some of our men were rather dull, the thoughts of approaching the Passage of the Rock probably annoyed them. Below the village of the Rock, we found some Indians fishing who invited us to the village; but we went to encamp on the opposite shore. While we were landing our Little Fellow made his appearance as an ambassador from the

people of the village, requesting our presence among them ; I, with Mr. Quesnel and six of the men, crossed over. The Indians received us with kindness, and we stayed with them a couple of hours when they ferried us back in small canoes. In the evening we observed the Indians fishing ; their nets, which resembled purses, were fixed to the end of long poles and dragged between two canoes.

All hands were ready early, but before the necessary arrangements were taken to prosecute our journey by land, it was past 8. We then crossed over to the village where we had embarked in canoes on the 29th. It being the end of the navigation, I made a present of the canoe and some little things we could not conveniently carry with us to our Little Fellow, which he immediately presented to his friends. Then each of us took charge of his own bundle and we marched into the village. 8th, Saturday.

The Indians did not receive us with the same cordiality they did when we went down ; however, they set mats for us and put stones in the fire in order to prepare us a meal. This operation required more time than our situation would permit, and we took our leave, still prepared for the worst because we had dangerous places to pass, defiles in which a few men might defy an army with stones. Some of the Indians who assisted in carrying our things pilfered a kettle and my calumet, but they were restored by order of the Chief.

At about 11 A. M., we arrived at a village where we were kindly treated ; here we missed our kettle a second time, and our Little Fellow informed us that it was stolen. The Indians of the village were alarmed at this incident, thinking no doubt that we would ill use them in consequence ; we assured them that the custom of white people was to punish only those who had injured them, and that, if we could lay hold of the Indian who had taken it, he should have reason to regret his rapacity ;

they seemed satisfied at this explanation. I made a few presents to those from whom we experienced friendship.

The friendly
Hacamaugh.

On examining our little baggage, we discovered that two or three other articles were missing, which had been taken by the Indians to whom we had entrusted the baggage at the Rock; this was a lesson not to be forgotten during the remainder of the journey. Soon after our departure at the end of the carrying place, we met two chiefs in two canoes from the Hacamaugh nation. They did not expect us, but they were so happy at our return that they lent us their canoes, while they themselves went on foot to the village. These Indians showed us every possible mark of kindness; having taken up our quarters with them for the night, they gave us plenty to eat and entertained us with a variety of songs, dances, &c., during the evening.

9th, Sunday.

This being a fine morning, we dried our things and at 1 P.M. took our departure. Some of the Indians who accompanied us offered to carry part of our baggage, we thanked them for their kindness, but would not trust our things out of our sight. The chief of the next village, having heard of our approach, sent two canoes to meet us, in which we embarked. The Indians gave us two excellent dogs, which made delicious meals for the men, besides fish and berries in abundance. Here we procured a few articles of curiosity, viz: a blanket of dogs' hair, a matted bag, a wooden comb of curious construction, &c. We observed here a variety of tools, pieces of iron and brass, a bunch of brass keys from the crews of a ship which the Indians of the sea had destroyed several years before.

10th, Monday.

Set out early; kept the left side of the river accompanied by several Indians who showed us the way. The road was excessively bad; we had to pass many difficult rocks, defiles, precipices through which there was a kind of beaten path practised by the Natives and made passable by means of scaffolds, bridges and ladders so peculiarly constructed that it required no small

degree of necessity, dexterity and courage in strangers to undertake. For instance, we had to ascend precipices by means of ladders composed of two long poles placed upright with sticks tied cross ways with twigs; upon the end of these, others were placed and so on to any height; add to this that the ladders were often so slack, that the smallest breeze put them in motion, swinging them against the rocks, while the steps leading from scaffold to scaffold were so narrow and irregular that they could scarcely be traced by the feet without the greatest care and circumspection; but the most perilous part was when another rock projected over the one we were clearing.

The Indians certainly deserve our grateful remembrance for their able assistance throughout these alarming situations. The descents were, if possible, still more difficult; in these places, we were under the necessity of trusting our things to the Indians, even our guns were handed from one to another, yet they thought nothing of it, they went up and down these wild places with the same agility as sailors do on board a ship. After escaping innumerable perils in the course of the day, we encamped about sunset; the Indians tried to fish but caught nothing; they however supplied us with plenty of dried fish.

Early this morning, we continued our route with the Little Fellow and another Indian; crossed a rapid river upon a bridge and soon after got to the end of the Portage, where we found three canoes in which those who were lame embarked; the others continued by land. Some of the Natives from below overtook us and, in the afternoon, we arrived at the village where we slept the 24th June; the Indians were happy to see us again, and favoured us with plenty of provisions. I wished to go on without delay, but our Little Fellow, aided by the people of the village, insisted on our passing the night with them.

11th, Tues-
day.

12th, Wednesday.

This morning after procuring a sufficiency of fish we set out; two canoes having followed, such of our people as were indisposed to walk, embarked in them, the others who went by land had now and then to make use of the canoes as ferry boats in crossing rivers.

At the carrying place where the canoes were left, Mr. Quesnel lost his way and was some time absent; several men and Indians went in search of him, but he found his way to the village without their assistance. The weather was exceedingly hot, and the road extremely bad all day.

13th, Thursday.

Started early accompanied by many Indians as usual. Previous to our departure the Chief gave us forty salmons and sent young men along with us to carry them saying: "The Indians above are poor"; I returned the chief's compliment to his satisfaction. We could not procure canoes, the Indians said the rapids were too strong to make use of them to any advantage. Soon after we had left the camp, the Indian who had supplied us with a canoe going down joined our party and offered his services again in like manner, which we accepted and found useful for many purposes in course of the day.

We passed the village where the Indians were so poor according to the account of the chief, yet they generously shared with us what little they had. Foul weather,—we were wet to the skin; the men being in bad humour, some of them would not approach the camp, such conduct under the circumstances was very unpleasant

14th, Friday.

Lost some time waiting for the men who had thought proper to remain behind; it was six o'clock before they joined the party and I reprimanded them, but they blamed the weather. At 8, we found ourselves at the head of the rapid where we escaped perishing on the 20th June (1), an Indian camp on the opposite

(1) Evidently an error, he meant 21st. Near Fargo Bar, where gold was first discovered. Mayne. "Four years in British Columbia".

side invited us over; we went. Here we found two of the guides we had employed on our way down, and the Indians, of their own accord, restored us a hat, a pair of shoes and some other articles we had lost in the rapids.

At 2 P.M., we arrived at the confluence or Forks of the Thompson River: two of our men who were behind came up with us with some Natives. Having been invited we visited a camp which was on an elevated ground and where we found Indians from the interior. These Indians have a warlike appearance; they crowded around us and gazed on us with astonishment. They were called *Swhanemugh* and spoke a different language from the tribes in the vicinity. They dress finely in leather, and we understood that their country was well stocked with animals, such as horses, deer, beaver &c. They gave us plenty of fresh salmon, berries and roots.

The Swhanemugh Indians.

Three or four children who were unwell were brought to me by their parents for medical assistance, and as I did not think fit to disappoint them, I sent one of the gentlemen for a vial of Turlington, but he brought laudanum; considering however the one of equal virtue with the other towards a cure, I mixed a few drops of what he brought with water, in this mixture I dipped my finger which I gently applied to the forehead of the sick. Believing no doubts in miracles, there were upwards of four score of applicants for a touch of my finger, and had we remained any length of time, I have reason to believe that the whole camp, which exceeded twelve hundred, would have followed the example. Most of the children were really afflicted with some serious disorder which reduced them to skeletons. The women of this tribe had the neatest dress of any we have seen in this quarter.

The Chief of the Hacamaughs, who had been so serviceable to us in going down, was here, but took no notice of us; this inattention made us suspect his former sincerity. However, the

Starving Indians.

other Indians appeared well disposed towards us ; they presented me with an otter belt and lent us their canoes to cross the river, still we could perceive something unpleasant in their demeanour ; it is true they had been waiting our arrival for a long time and were then actually starving ; they had been killing their horses, and we saw the hide of one quite fresh hanging upon a tree. This degree of famine perhaps caused the disagreeable gloom which so forcibly attracted our notice.

After leaving these Indians, we continued for the rest of the day until we came opposite a village to which we crossed and where we found the people poor but civil ; they regaled us with dog flesh.

16th, Sun-
day.

.....
This day we passed several camps of Indians ; the weather being wet and bad, we encamped early with a band whose chief made me a present of a coat of mail to make shoes, as we were much in want of this article ; our feet were covered with blisters from our continually walking on the worst of roads, and some of the men, who were lame, were in perpetual torture.

17th, Mon-
day.

I procured this morning several curiosities and satisfied the Chief for his present of the preceding night. We went off and breakfasted at a place where, on the 15th June, I gave medicine to a sick man who was still there and unwell. About noon we came to the fort of the Askettih tribes, where the old Atnah chief and our interpreter left us our way down. The Indians received us kindly and requested we should wait the return of their chief who had gone to another camp. To this we agreed, and, about two hours after, the Chief made his appearance accompanied with a numerous suite. He delivered a long and loud speech to which he added the acceptable present of a few coats of mail. He then pressed us to go with him to the other camp ; this invitation we had reason to decline ; we, however, crossed the river and encamped directly opposite the place which he wanted us to visit.

The Indians immediately sent canoes for us and some of our people went. The camp consisted of upwards one thousand persons with the whole of whom I had to shake hands, as they were strangers. The Chief made a harangue and then invited us to his shade where we were treated with great hospitality. At this place, an Indian who was labouring under some disease offered me a pair of shoes in hopes of obtaining some relief. When we returned to our encampment, we learned that the Indians during our absence had made several trips across the river with invitations to the rest of our party to go and join them.

This morning at the earnest request of the Indians, Mr. Stuart^{18th, Tuesday.} and such of the men as wished it paid a visit to the camp. Mr. Stuart procured many curiosities, and the men brought back some dogs, which, to their palates, proved a delicious dish.

A woman who had followed our party for these three days past, was left last night at the camp, but she found means to come and join us again, and was the only Native, from this quarter, in our suite during this day. The country being extremely rough and the paths numerous we could not keep together, consequently, we lost some time waiting for those who had deviated from the right path. We encamped near a village which our Little Fellow went immediately to visit; on his return, he informed us that the greatest portion of the *cache* which we^{Loss of a cache.} had left there had been destroyed by wild animals, and that for the remainder we were under obligations to the Indians who had secured it for our return.

The report of the diminution of our cache caused a gloominess^{19th Wednesday.} among the men. Being afraid of starving, some of them went so far as to insinuate a wish of remaining with the Natives, and one of them dropped behind, visibly with that intention, but seeing that none of the others followed his example, he doubled his pace and in a short time overtook us. About this time we met two of the Atnah nation who were on their way to the Askettih country, and who, returning with us, gave us some

useful informations. At sunset, we found ourselves at the foot of the Rock which gave us so much trouble coming down. Here several Natives joined us and informed us that many more were passing upon the hills. Although there might be no danger I thought it more advisable to run no unnecessary risk, I therefore despatched Mr. Quesnel and two men, by way of precaution, to our canoes which were about three miles distant.

20th
Thursday

Early in the morning, we proceeded on our journey and soon after joined Mr. Stuart, when we had the inexpressible satisfaction of finding our canoes and our *cache* perfectly safe. For this good fortune we felt grateful to the Indians who continually attended to their security during our absence. We lost no time, but set about preparing the canoes for the voyage; having no materials on hand, one of the canoes, although good, was cut up to repair the other two. While we were employed upon this service, number of the Natives called to see us and passed on to the other stages; our Little Fellow and the two Atnahs accompanied them.

At 3 P. M., all being ready, we took our departure; safe in our canoes, we had reason to consider ourselves once more at home, and notwithstanding the many trying moments which we had experienced, we talked of the past as of nothing and felt happy;—encamped at dark.

21st, Fri-
day.

Set out early.—We had to oppose a strong current and encounter great difficulties in the rapid; bad weather and rain rendered our situation still more unpleasant. While we were busy in one of the carrying places, several Natives on horseback paid us a visit, and retired in succession as their curiosity was satisfied. We encamped about dark.

22nd, Sa-
turday.

The friend-
ly Atnahs
of *Rapide
Couvert*.

We were off early; still a strong current and many rapids; the waters having greatly abated we had more carrying places than before. At 8 A.M., we arrived at the *rapide couvert* which is more than a mile long and where we were obliged to carry all our baggage over long and steep hills; here we found

Indians among whom were the old Atnah chief and his brother, both so overjoyed to see us that they annoyed us with caresses. They assured us that they felt extremely anxious for our safety during our absence, and that they had determined, if the Indians of the sea destroyed us, to collect their friends and go to revenge us. We could not take these professions for Gospel, we however thanked the chief for his friendship and good intentions, at the same time I wished to make him and his friends understand that we were not to be easily destroyed, as our nature and our arms were superior to any thing we could meet among Indians. When the portage was done we crossed over to the Indian camp. The chief and his brother embarked and crossed with us, the others made use of a small canoe constructed of pine bark and curiously formed, being narrow at both the ends which pointed downwards in the shape of a funnel. The men described it, "*un canot à bec d'éturgeon*"; it could carry no more than two at a time.

The Indians of the camp received us with loud acclamations and made us numerous presents in leather. Our Little Fellow remained at this camp; he would have accompanied us to the end of the voyage, but the Indians advised him to go and find his friends. I made him a present of some necessary articles such as pleased him most. The woman also remained, it being also the wish of the chief. We continued our route and encamped late.

.....

.....

Arrived early at Chilkootin River, and found the Old Chief there; he came the night before from the *rapide couvert* and rode through the plains beyond the hills which line the water communication. About two hundred Natives from every quarter were assembled at this place to have a peep at us *en passant*. They wished us to delay our departure until their friends who

25th, Tues-
day.

were on their way to the camp should arrive, this wish we could not satisfy. The Indians, however, gave us a plentiful feast made up of venison, onions, roots, &c. ; they also made us a present of some leather and beaver skins. After making a suitable acknowledgment for these obligations, we took our departure. The Old Chief, with several others in his suite, continued by land to the next stage. At *Portage du baril*, the Indians assisted in passing over our baggage, which was of great service to us, the portage being long and the weather extremely hot. In course of the afternoon we shot a deer on the beach and encamped soon after.

26th Wed-
nesday.

The Chil-
kotins.

Proceeded on as usual ;—had rain and bad weather ; got to *Portage la Truite* in the afternoon where we encamped. Here again we found the Old Chief with a large assembly of Atnahs and Chikotins ; the latter are from the westward and came on purpose to have a sight of us, having never seen white men before. They had information of our return from the lower parts of the river by messages across the country.

The Chilkotins, who are a tribe of the Carriers and whom we could understand without the assistance of an interpreter, are from the head of the Chilkotin River. They speak of their country as plentifully stocked with all kind of animals which are common to the North-West ; they seem to be acquainted with Christian goods and are, if I am not mistaken, of a bold, roguish disposition.

27th,
Thursday.

Indian ho-
nesty and
generosity.

We had to ascend some very difficult and dangerous rapids particularly the one where we were nearly lost the 1st of June. Here again one of our canoes narrowly escaped ; while hauling it up among steep banks and strong cascades, it filled, and all our things got wet. At the end of the carrying place of this rapid, we found our *cache* of provisions and canoes in the same good order as we left them. After supplying ourselves plentifully, I made over the remainder to the Indian who had it in charge ; he immediately divided the same among his friends who were

greatly in want. Having been in a state of starvation for some time previous to our arrival, they deserve much credit for having abstained from the *cache*. The things which got wet were spread in the sun, but before they were thoroughly dry we embarked and crossed to the opposite bank: here we found a dipping net with which one of our young men tried his skill in fishing, but without success.

We had to oppose a strong current which greatly fatigued the men. Early in the afternoon, we arrived at the village of the Old Chief; he got before us as usual by land. Here ends the rocky country, all the portages and bad places being passed, we had now but plain sailing for the rest of the voyage. The chief's brother delivered to us four bales of fish which he had in charge and, this being the last village of the Atnah nation, he did not follow us any farther. Having experienced from him kind attention and much service, I presented him with a gun, some ammunition and some other necessary articles and gave his brother a dagger.

This morning, after repairing the canoes, we took our leave of the Indians at 6. The Atnahs are good people, they expressed their regret at our departure, and begged that we would return to their country as soon as possible in order to reside among them as traders. This, I in a manner promised. We went on tolerably well for some time notwithstanding the current we had to oppose. We passed several houses and fisheries and, in the afternoon, came to the place where we saw the first Indians and where we lost our swivel on the 30th May. Here we found a band of Tahowtins who received us with kindness, they had furs but were loathe to part with them. These Indians procure their necessaries from the westward and seem to be well supplied with iron utensils.

(1) Near Soda Creek.

Salmon
barriers.

They gave us plenty of salmon which they take in abundance by means of barriers. These barriers form a work of some ingenuity and are constructed in the following manner. Strong posts are driven into the ground at certain distances, and these distances are filled with frames made of splinters placed so close that a fish cannot pass between. On the top of these, are squared beams for the purpose of walking, and underneath are placed props to support the whole against the force of the current. At one end is the gate, and sometimes there are gates in the center which receive the contrivance which confines the fish. This contrivance is shaped like cask and composed of splinters the size of a finger and several feet long, and secured by watap hoops. The end that is placed below in the current is made inside like a funnel, through which the fish enter, one by one, and cannot find the way back, but must remain as in a net.

This country is mountainous and poor ; the Natives generally live on fish, of which they lay by in the summer a sufficiency for the winter. A few, indeed, take animals in snares and, when the crust of the snow is strong, they run down the deer with dogs, but this is a general custom among Indians.

30th, Sun-
day.

Previous to our arrival at this place, two of the Indians had a serious quarrel ; the one stabbed the other with a lance which left a bad wound. We set out at 5 ; discovered that one of our *caches* was destroyed, but the contents were only one bale of fish. We observed an Indian in a small canoe who wished to avoid us, and we had some difficulty to approach him. However, with a little coaxing, we prevailed upon him to leave his own canoe and to embark in ours. We wanted him in order to introduce us to a camp of his friend who were at some distance.

When we came near the camp we sent him ashore to notify them of our approach. We found in this camp several families of the Nasquitin Nation. The men received us at the water side, armed ; being strangers they were in doubts as to our intentions, but, after having been informed of our character, they laid by

their weapons and treated us with confidence. Soon after, several more made their appearance from all directions and haranguing as they came. They had some furs for which they asked a high price. A kind of white shell found along the sea shore forms the principal medium of exchange among all the Indians to the west of the Rocky Mountains. This article is to them what money is to us. Shell money.

Passed several camps of Indians in the course of the day ; at sunset, approaching a camp to put ashore, the Indians flew to their arms, put on their coats of mail and appeared as mad as furies ; however, on receiving proper explanations, they altered their tone and received us with kindness. 31st, Monday.

Set out early, debarked at Quesnel's river, where we found some of the Natives, from whom we procured some furs, plenty of fish and berries—continued our route until sunset. August 1st, Tuesday. Quesnel River.

Early in the water, arrived at the Mountain Portage,—some difficulty in the rapid—found our cache safe,—continued and encamped on the left of the River. 2nd, Wednesday.

Set out early as usual ;—found a family of Indians busily employed fishing ; they gave us as much salmon as we wished. In course of the day, we passed several houses. At one of the camps where we put ashore, the chief, who was considered a great man, offered us two bear skins in exchange for other articles, and some of his people followed us to his encampment. 3rd, Thursday.

A boy who was a relation to our young men, embarked with us in order to visit his friend—proceeded on till night. 4th, Friday.

Set out at an early hour. Passed a portage and several rapids and encamped upon the right bank. The men found a large fungus which had grown upon a hemlock tree ; it has the same virtue as rhubarb, and the Natives use it to dress or whiten their leather. 5th, Saturday.

Set out early, and at noon arrived at the Fort where we found Mr. Faries with his two men. 6th, Sunday.

END.

M. FRANÇOIS-VICTOR MALHIOT

JOURNAL

DU

FORT KAMANAITIQUOYA

A LA

RIVIÈRE MONTRÉAL

1804-1805

LE LAC AU FLAMBEAU

WISCONSIN

LETTRE AUX LECTEURS.

Messieurs,

Ce serait trop hasarder pour moi d'entreprendre un journal dans toutes ses formes; mon éducation est trop médiocre..... Il est vrai que dès les premières années de mon enfance, je scus lire, mais je n'eus pas attrapé l'âge de raison que l'oisiveté et les plaisirs m'empêchèrent d'aller plus loin et suis resté dans ma petite sphère. J'écris parce que l'on m'ordonne d'écrire et par soumission et respect pour la personne qui m'a donné des ordres.

C'est plutôt des notes qu'un journal. Il ne s'est rien passé dans le cours de mon voyage qu'aussitôt je l'ai barbouillé tant bien que mal; tantôt en mauvais français, tantôt en patois Canadien. J'ai dépeint du mieux qu'il m'a été possible le caractère des principaux Sauvages de l'endroit. J'ai fait l'éloge du poste du Lac au Flambeau et dit tout ce que je pensais de chaque personne qui est avec moi.

Peut-être me trouverez-vous sévère dans mes pensées et inconstant dans mes jugements, surtout envers les Sauvages, et direz-vous que c'est un effet de ma haine et de ma mauvaise humeur. Mais, non! Que Dieu me préserve d'en vouloir à qui que ce soit sur la terre, et je déclare à la face du Ciel que tout ce qui est écrit dans ce livre, est vrai et selon l'équité d'un parfait honnête homme. Honni soit qui mal y pense!....

Messieurs,

Votre très-humble et très-respectueux serviteur,

F. Vt. M. l. o.

JOURNAL
DU
FORT KAMANAITIQUOYA
A LA
RIVIÈRE MONTRÉAL
PAR
FRANÇOIS VICTOIRE MALHIOT (1)

J'ai parti à quatre heures du Fort Kamanaitiquoya avec l'équi-1804.
pement de onze ballots assortis, vingt barils double force, quatre JUILLET 9.
barils de poudre, cinq sacs plomb et balles, un demi ballot de
chaudières, une caisse à fusils, douze pièges et quatre rôles de
tabac, le tout confié à mes charges par Monsieur William Mac
Gillivray pour l'aller convertir dans le Département de la Ri-
vière Montréal. De plus, j'étais muni de vivres français autant

(1) M. François Victor, alias Vletoire, alias Erambert Malhiot fut pris, bien jeune encore, du goût des aventures et des voyages. Très vif, très intelligent, gai et grand parleur, il méprisa l'étude et lui préféra la vie libre et accidentée des traiteurs des "pays d'en haut".

A peine âgé de quinze ans, il entra dans la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, en qualité d'apprenti commis, et, cinq ans après, en 1796, il était promu commis, et envoyé au poste de la Rivière Rouge.

Bien qu'il eût des qualités incontestables, un grand courage et un rare esprit d'observation, M. Malhiot ne put parvenir à un poste élevé dans la Compagnie, et il

qu'un propriétaire pourrait l'espérer, quatre cents livres de farines, deux barils et demi de lard, quarante livres de galette, un baril de shrub, un baril d'esprit, deux de sucre, quatre livres de thé, un jambon, pain, beurre, etc., etc. L'impétuosité du vent m'obligea de mettre à terre à l'entrée du Lac Supérieur; j'y trouvai Corbin, un des commis de M. M. Cadotte (1). Mon mal de dents a augmenté.

11 mercredi.
di.

Mes gens n'ont pris que 2 Dorés dans leurs filets; J'ai parti de mon campement après avoir mis chaudières (2); alors il était cinq heures et demie, après avoir marché deux heures, le vent m'obligea à camper..... Pour tous les diables, mon mal de dents ne veut pas m'abandonner.

12, jeudi.

Je me mis en marche ce matin à quatre heures; à onze heures je rencontraï un canot allège d'X Y, mais je n'ai pu savoir où il allait. Je passai à midi au Grand Portage; alors la goëlette d'X Y, levait l'ancre; un moment après, je la vis au large des îles faire voile du côté du Sault-Ste-Marie. A une heure et demie, je vis Chorette et son aide-de-camp Lalancette, deux d'em-

est très probable que son manque d'instruction fut l'obstacle le plus sérieux à son avancement.

En 1804, on lui confia une expédition de traite au Wisconsin. Il y passa un triste hiver, au milieu de Sauvages gâtés et surexcités par la vigoureuse opposition que se faisaient les traiteurs canadiens et par l'abus des "boissons". Il y construisit le Fort du Lac au Flambeau.

Dégoûté de la vie de traiteur, M. Malhiot revint au Canada, en 1807, emmenant avec lui son fils, alors âgé de cinq ans, — François Xavier Ignace, — qu'il avait eu d'une Sauvagesse dont il avait fait sa femme, "à la façon du pays". Il s'établit à Contre-Cœur, où il mourut en 1840.

M. Malhiot, suivant en cela l'usage établi parmi les Nor-Westers, laissa sa femme dans les pays d'en haut. Elle s'y remaria avec un nommé Desroches, puis vint s'établir à l'Épiphanie avec son mari. A la mort de ce dernier, elle épousa un Monsieur Pelletier, le père de M. O. Pelletier, qui fut pendant quelques années député du comté de l'Assomption à l'Assemblée Législative de Québec.

Le lieutenant colonel Pierre Ignace Malhiot, qui servit dans l'armée anglaise aux Indes, et l'honorable F. X. Malhiot, décédé à Boucherville en 1855, étaient ses frères.

(1) Fils de J. B. Cadotte, un des premiers traiteurs dans le Nord-Ouest après la Cession, et l'associé de M. Henry.

(2) Préparer un repas chaud.

ployés d'X Y pour la Rivière Montréal : ils étaient campés et paraissaient avoir trois bagages et trois canots. Je campe ici à la Rivière Brulée et fais tendre les filets. Mon mal de dents ne veut pas relâcher.

Mes hommes ont levé leurs filets ce matin et ont pris deux ^{13, vendredi.} truites et un blanc ; à six heures, nous avons parti après avoir mis chaudière, et à 11 heures, les Sauvages de M. Mi.....Cadotte m'ont attrappé et m'ont dit avoir vu Chorette ; qu'il leur avait dit qu'une de ces trois canotées était pour la Rivière des Sautoux, une et demie pour la Rivière Montréal et l'autre demie pour La Pointe. Il est trois heures après midi et je campe au Grand Marais parceque les Sauvages me disent que j'y ferai bonne pêche.

Nous avons pris aux filets quatre belles truites, trois grosses ^{14, samedi.} ciscaouettes et un blanc. A cinq heures je fis jeter les canots à l'eau ; à midi je rencontrai un canot du Fond-du-Lac, qui faisait route pour Kamanaitiquoya, chargé d'écorces. Ce soir je campe à l'hivernement de Collin

Hier, nous avons été forcés par le vent de camper à la *Roche* ^{16, lundi.} *debout*, et ce matin, je me suis mis en marche à 4 heures, et à ^{Remède} 2 heures après-midi il m'a fallu mettre à terre, le vent étant ^{pour le} extraordinairement fort. Mon mal de dents fut si grand la nuit ^{mal de} passée, qu'après avoir essayé tous les remèdes imaginables et avoir pris cinquante gouttes d'opium, sans résultat, je me résolus à prendre du rhum ; j'avalai d'un coup un demiard de pur esprit, qui fit effet dans un quart d'heure et me fit dormir jusqu'au matin. J'ai le corps brisé, la mâchoire sensible, le cœur fade, mais mon mal de dents s'est évadé avec le demiard d'esprit.

J'ai parti avant-hier à la voile, mais j'ai été obligé de mettre ^{19, jeudi.} à terre à une heure après-midi à la Petite Pêche, parce qu'il ventait trop ; la pluie et le vent ayant continué hier presque

toute la journée, je n'ai pu partir de mon campement qu'à 4 heures après-midi et je suis arrivé ici, à l'entrée de la rivière du Fond-du-Lac, à une heure du matin. A 4 heures, je me rendis au Fort de Monsieur Sayer; je le trouvai encore au lit, et j'eus l'honneur de déjeuner avec lui.

Il me fit le plaisir de me donner un baril de sucre pour un baril de gomme, qui m'avait été donné à Kamanaitiquoya au lieu d'un baril de sucre. A neuf heures, je pris congé de lui et suis revenu rejoindre mes hommes à l'entrée de la rivière.

20, ven-
dredi.

Je n'ai pu partir hier de la Rivière du Fond-du-Lac parce que le vent s'éleva avec force au moment où j'allais embarquer; je n'en suis parti que ce matin et j'ai eu la voile toute la journée. Nous campons ce soir à la Rivière Ciscaouette

22, di-
manche.

J'ai resté dégradé par la pluie et le vent à mon même campement toute la journée d'avant-hier, d'hier et d'aujourd'hui jusqu'à midi, et je ne pus faire jeter les canots à l'eau qu'à trois heures, parce que le lac fut longtemps trop agité. Je me rendis jusqu'à la Rivière à la Framboise; j'y couchai et en suis parti ce matin à 4 heures. A 11 heures, je suis arrivé ici, à La Pointe, le fort de M. Cadotte; je me suis résolu d'y passer le reste de la journée pour donner le temps aux hommes de se faire faire des souliers pour passer le portage. Je traitai des Sauvages dix-huit pièces de poisson blanc pour du tabac. J'ai expressément défendu à mes gens de changer leur blé pour du poisson.....

24, mardi.

J'ai parti ce matin à 9 heures et ai campé à 11 à la Mauvaise Rivière parcequ'il ventait trop pour continuer ma route. Le gendre des "Grandes Oreilles," nommé Rémond, m'apprend qu'ils sont campés à la Rivière Montréal et que le "Genou" ne partira pour le Lac au Flambeau que dans quelques jours.— Il y a ici beaucoup de tourtes; j'en tuai 24.

Je suis parti ce matin à 7½ de la Rivière Mauvaise et suis ^{25, mercre-} arrivé ici, au Portage de la Rivière Montréal, à neuf heures et trois quarts. J'y ai trouvé le vieux " Les Grandes Oreilles " et le " Genou ; " ce dernier me dit être très mécontent du Fort des X Y. Il n'a pas un seul grain de bled à manger, point de munitions et travaille les tourtes avec des bâtons. Je crois, de la manière qu'il m'a parlé, qu'il a du mal à faire à Chorette, ou au moins le piller, car, a-t-il dit : "*O Chien ! tu vas faire pitié !*" ces derniers mots renferment bien des choses.

J'apprends par un des frères du " Genou, " qui est parti du Lac au Flambeau il y a huit jours, que les Sauvages ont été en guerre, qu'ils sont maintenant en chasse et que nos gens qui ont passé l'été dans les terres devaient partir il y a quatre jours pour venir au devant de nous.

Je donne au vieux " Les Grandes Oreilles " sept chopines de rhum mêlé, pour rien, parceque, tous les printemps, il donne quantité de poisson à nos gens quand ils sortent des terres, et il est d'ailleurs dévoué au Nord-Ouest.

J'ordonne aux hommes de se préparer à entrer dans le portage ^{26, jeudi.} demain : je leur donne à chacun une jointée de farine, une livre de lard, et un coup de rhum pour regal.....j'ai donné pour 16 plus à crédit au " Genou " après bien des supplications et de belles promesses de travailler pour nous cet hiver, et à son frère, " La Pourceline, " presque autant.

Nos gens du Lac au Flambeau, Tremblé, Martineau et LeBeau ^{27, ven-} arrivèrent ici hier au soir à six heures avec leur butin, décidés ^{dredi.} à aller trouver M. Cadotte à la Pointe s'ils n'avaient trouvé un autre commis pour remplacer Gauthier. Ils sont maigres et ^{Plaintes} ^{contre Gau-} décharnés comme de vrais squelettes et disent avoir été mal-traités plus que jamais par Gauthier ; que la moitié du temps ils n'ont point mangé, tandis que lui n'a pas passé un seul jour sans faire un bon repas ;qu'il est décidé à aller pour les X Y s'il est remplacé par un autre, et, de plus, qu'il veut la

mort jurée à Racicot pour avoir écrit contre lui, et qu'il a à faire meurtre avant de laisser le Lac au Flambeau ; qu'il est décidé à arracher les déserts, c'est-à-dire les patates et les bleds qu'il a faits et fait faire. Qu'enfin, il est comme une bête féroce et qu'il ne passe guère de jour sans jurer, tempêter et pester contre ceux qui hivernèrent avec lui l'an passé. Il n'a fait tout au plus que trois paquets, et un autre qu'il a traité de son propre butin.

Je n'entreprendrai pas le portage aujourd'hui parce que ces gens des terres demandent une journée pour se reposer. Qu'ils sont faibles !!!..... Je leur ai donné chacun un coup de shrub, deux jointées de farine et deux livres de lard, et ils se mirent à manger avec tant d'avidité que je fus obligé de leur ôter, par deux fois, le plat de devant eux, et, malgré cela, j'ai craint pendant longtemps qu'il n'en résultât quelques conséquences ; mais heureusement ils en ont été quittes pour des coliques.....

28, samedi. J'ai parti ce matin du Lac Supérieur avec sept de mes hommes pour me rendre incontinent au Lac du Flambeau. J'ai emporté avec moi un ballot de marchandises, un rôle de tabac, 20lb de plomb, 20lb de balles, les trois quarts d'un sac de bled, un baril de double force et tout mon butin. Nous avons fait aujourd'hui quarante poses (1). Je laissai le reste du butin aux soins et charges de Racicot. Durocher ayant attrapé *l'herbe-à-la-puce* est aussi avec lui, sans cela il serait venu avec moi avec une charge..... Mon mal de dents reprend comme de plus belle..... Je donne un filet de shrub à mes gens.

29, dimanche. Nous n'avons fait aujourd'hui que 20 poses, parceque, ayant eu trop mal aux dents la nuit dernière, je me fis suer la tête ce matin, ce qui a un peu fait diminuer le mal. Il est présentement 4 heures du soir et nous campons parce que plusieurs des gens se plaignent fort du mal de jambes et il est nécessaire de les

(1) Les " poses " dans les portages étaient à une distance moyenne de six à sept cents verges les unes des autres, et la charge ordinaire du " voyageur " était de deux paquets, pesant, chacun, de 80 à 90 livres.

ménager. Mon mal de dents est un peu moindre qu'il ne l'était ce matin ; j'ai quelquefois des faiblesses, faute de pouvoir prendre de nourriture. Je donnai à mes hommes un coup de shrub.

.....

Nous avons parti ce matin à sept heures et nous sommes enfin ³¹, mardi. arrivés, à une heure après midi, au bout du Portage, les gens un peu fatigués et Bourbon avec un grand mal de jambe. Je les envoie incontinent chercher les canots qui sont en cache, pour les faire gommer et leur faire faire des avirons afin de pouvoir partir demain matin.

.....

Etant parti ce matin à 4 heures, je suis arrivé ici, au Fort du Lac Flambeau, à 3 heures après midi. J'y ai trouvé Gauthier tout-à-fait démonté, tremblant et ne sachant que dire. Je lui fis la lecture de la lettre de Monsieur William McGillivray qui l'intimida encore d'avantage et lui fit répandre des larmes. Je m'acquittai envers lui de toutes les commissions de Monsieur McGillivray, de Monsieur Sayer et lui ai fait toutes remontrances possibles, après lesquelles il avoua ses fautes.

Je viens de prendre l'état de tout ce qui pouvait être à la compagnie (1), et me suis emparé des jardinages. J'ai estimé ce qu'il y a de pelleteries à trois paquets ; outre cela trente peaux de chevreuil, six castors, une loutre, une peau d'ours et vingt quatre rats musqués, (qu'il dit avoir traités de son butin) dont je me suis emparé, mais qu'il traitera au magasin s'il se décide à passer l'hiver avec moi et veut agir comme un honnête homme doit faire.

Nous sommes ici sans pain ni galette, et nous attendons la Providence.

(1) Cet état, trouvé parmi les papiers de M. Roderic M. McKenzie, est reproduit ici afin de donner une idée des objets de traite envoyés aux forts de second ordre de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest.

ÉTAT DES EFFETS REÇUS DE GAUTHIER LE 2 AOUT L'AN 1804.

1 habit de chef	Outils et ustensiles du Fort
1 chemise toile	4 vieilles haches
1 chemise coton	3 tarières
2 bonnets drapés	7 vieilles chaudières
1 mouchoir soy	1 égouine
$\frac{1}{2}$ pc. de ruban	1 varlope
1 miroir en papier	1 tille (?)
3 grands couteaux	1 perçoir
2 doz. peignes de corne	1 entonnoir
1 jeu de cartes	1 vieille champlure
3 paires de ciseaux	2 vieux pots de pinte
2 colliers d'homme	2 " " demiard
$\frac{1}{2}$ lb. vermillon	1 " " roquille
3 doz. alènes	5 cassetètes
5 battefeu	1 paire de darts
12 tirebourres	1 tranche
$\frac{1}{2}$ botte fil à collets	1 vieux fusil grenadier
2 médecines	1 pistolet
1 chapeau	1 vieille ligne du Banc
<i>Pelletries</i>	6 vieilles rets, dont une seule peut servir
4 peaux d'ours, d'été	2 vieilles rapés
4 loutres "	2 " limes
6 martres "	1 piochon
218 rats musqués "	1 marteau
20 lbs. castors	
100 peaux rouges de chevreuil	Trois vieux canots d'écorce propre a charrier du sable ou de la terre

(Signé) F. VT. MALHIOT.

Je proposai à Gauthier, ce matin, d'aller hiverner à Latonagané ; ^{3, vendre-}di. que je lui donnerais un petit équipement sans rhum, mais il ne veut pas y consentir parcequ'il dit qu'il y aura trop de misère. Il m'a demandé de l'envoyer dans la Rivière des Sauteurs pour travailler contre La Lancette, mais je lui dis qu'il n'aurait point de butin de moi pour là, et que j'avais d'autres personnes à y envoyer. Il me dit alors qu'il irait toujours pour hiverner avec les parents de sa femme et qu'il aurait des marchandises du Petit Mi... Cadotte. Je dois lui donner un petit canot pour s'y rendre avec vivres et munitions, il se plaint beaucoup de ce que je me suis emparé des jardinages.

Je viens de faire partir Bazinet pour aller à trois heures de marche d'ici où il y a des Sauvages d'X Y qui ont des vivres. Mes hommes se reposent aujourd'hui, demain, ils partiront pour aller faire leur portage. Tous les déserts que j'ai pu voir ont bonne apparence. J'ai eu tout ce que le beau-frère de Chorette pouvait avoir de viande et de pelleteries, et mes hommes m'apprirent que le bruit courait que les Sauvages veulent aller en guerre.

Bazinet est arrivé ce matin avec le vieux *Plat Côté*, qui m'a ^{4, samedi.} donné de la viande en pièces et quelques peaux de chevreuil pour du rhum. Mes gens partent incontinent pour le portage Montréal, George Yarns doit commander pour la marche et Racicot pour avoir soin du butin. J'envoie aujourd'hui Bazinet au Ouseconsaint pour tâcher d'avoir le meilleur Plus des Sauvages et quelque peu de folle (1) : il emporte avec lui un petit assortiment de marchandises et les trois quarts d'un baril double force. J'envoie Bourbon avec lui parce qu'il a mal aux jambes et est incapable de faire son devoir dans le portage, et je reste à garder le fort avec Beaulieu, un homme de Montréal, qui se décide

(1) Folle avoine, espèce de riz sauvage qui pousse dans les marais et dont la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest faisait un grand approvisionnement.

à passer l'hiver avec moi, après m'avoir promis de ne point boire de rhum, de travailler en honnête homme et de ne point mettre les pieds chez les X Y de l'hiver.

5, di-
manche.

J'eus hier au soir du vieux *La Pierre-à-affiler* douze peaux de chevreuil pour du rhum. Il m'a assuré qu'il n'avait plus rien, et qu'il n'aurait rien à donner à son gendre, Chorette, s'il arrivait. J'envoie Gauthier et Beaulieu chez un des enfants du vieux *La Chouette* pour avoir ce qu'il a de pelleteries et de vivres. Je reste seul au Fort; que l'on juge de mon ennui !

6, lundi.

Gauthier est revenu hier au soir sans avoir pu voir le Sauvage; j'eus ce matin du vieux *Lacrémaillière* un ours en viande.

Il se laisse
passer pour
le frère de
M. W. Mac-
Gillivray.

Bazinet et Gauthier m'ont fait passer pour le frère de Monsieur MacGillivray avec les Sauvages et pour un des propriétaires de la Compagnie. La chose a produit un très bon effet jusqu'à présent, car ils ne me nomment jamais autrement que leur "Père"; j'aime à croire qu'ils me respecteront plus qu'ils ne l'auraient fait, et se feront gloire de traiter avec moi cet hiver. En conséquence, bien loin de réprimander Bazinet et Gauthier et de leur défendre de dire de telles choses, je les ai approuvés.... et j'ai lieu d'espérer que ces messieurs n'y trouveront aucun mal, ni ne se trouveront disgraciés de ma témérité, puisqu'il y va de leurs intérêts. Rien ne m'a conduit dans cette action que le désir de faire de bons retours et non la gloire de passer pour ce que je ne suis pas. D'ailleurs, si je me trouve honoré de passer pour le frère du premier agent du Nord et l'associé de ses associés, en revanche, qu'ils ne se croient pas retrogradés en rien, ni avilis, car je suis le fils d'un respectable gentilhomme et suis riche de sentiment et d'honneur.

8, mercre-
di.

.....
La femme du vieux "La Chouette" arriva hier au soir et me fit présent de quatre pièces de viande sèche: j'envoie à son mari une brassée de tabac pour distribuer à ses enfants et à ses gens.

Je n'ai pu jusqu'à présent, manque de temps et pour cause de maladie, faire aucune observation sur le pays et les Sauvages, ^{Descrip- tion du pays.} mais comme j'ai du mieux aujourd'hui, je commencerai et dirai que, de tous les endroits et lieux que j'ai pu voir depuis treize années que je voyage, celui-ci est le plus affreux et le plus ingrat. Le chemin du Portage est vraiment celui du ciel, parcequ'il est étroit, rempli d'embarras, de lardons, d'épines et de masquèques. (1) Les hommes qui le passent chargés, et qui sont obligés d'y passer un bagage méritent certainement le nom "d'hommes" !!!

Ce vilain portage n'est habité que par des hiboux, parce qu'aucun autre animal y trouverait sa vie, et les chants de ces oiseaux solitaires sont capables de faire frayeur à un ange et intimider un César !

Quant au Lac du Flambeau, (2) il mériterait plutôt le nom de marécage que celui de lac, et on y prendrait plus aisément, dans cette saison, des ouaouarons aux rets que du poisson. Voilà trois fois que je fais tendre depuis mon arrivée sans avoir pu prendre une pièce. J'envoie aujourd'hui Gauthier jeter ses filets dans un autre lac, peut être y prendrons nous quelques écrivisses !!! Pour la rivière, je ne la nommerai jamais autrement qu'un petit ruisseau, parceque, à bien des endroits, une souris pourrait la traverser sans se mouiller le ventre..... Tous les Sauvages que j'ai pu voir jusqu'à présent m'ont paru faire de bon Besthia ; une autre fois, lorsque je les aurai tous vus, j'en parlerai plus amplement.....

Le *Petit Forgeron*, Sauvage du Vieux Désert, arriva ici hier 9, jeudi. au soir ; je traitai de lui 4 castors, 2 loutres, une peau d'ours et deux peaux passées d'original. Je lui ai donné à crédit pour cinq plus de munitions et de tabac, et il ne doit revenir que cet

(1) Marais.

(2) Voir : Manuscrit de John Johnston, "An account of Lake Superior", pour la description du pays autour du Lac au Flambeau et de la Rivière Montréal.

automne. Nous avons enfin pris dans nos filets ce matin cinq carpes et un "Masequinongé"; mais il a fallu que Gauthier ait été découcher avec Beaulieu, mon homme de Montréal; ils ont tué quatre perdrix..... Miracle!!!

Les écureuils font bien du carnage dans les champs de bled; ils m'en mangèrent 77 épis cette nuit passée.

.....
11, samedi. Le vieux "Lachouette" arriva hier au soir avec sa bande; je lui donnai un petit baril de quatre pots, pour rien.

.....
Appréciation des Sauvages. Nous eûmes beaucoup de tablature cette nuit dans "la boisson"; ils se querellèrent ensemble, et nous nous querellâmes avec eux presque à en venir aux coups. Pour un rien, je me rétracterais si je ne craignais de passer pour inconstant, et je dirais qu'ils sont de bien mauvais crâbles. Tous les Sauvages que j'ai vus avant eux étaient réputés mauvais, coquins et dévoués au pillage, je les ai trouvés doux, sages, polis et dociles; ces derniers passaient pour être bons, effables et intéressés pour le Fort, et je les ai trouvés détestables. Cependant ils me firent de grandes excuses ce matin, me disant que jamais la chose ne leur était arrivée, et qu'ils étaient trop saouls, excuses ordinaires de ces chiens noirs!..... Je menaçai le vieux "LaChouette" de ne pas lui donner son pavillon, et lui ai fait faire par Gauthier une harangue analogue à sa conduite. Je suis très mortifié d'être obligé de marquer ici que je n'ai pas trouvé Gauthier tout à fait résolu avec les Sauvages, comme un homme devrait l'être.

.....
13, lundi. La Providence a bien voulu nous secourir, car nous avons pris ce matin aux filets vingt-huit carpes et quatre crapaix.

Dangers de la traite aux forts. Je suis tout-à-fait résolu, si ma destination d'hivernement est pour ce poste l'année prochaine, de demander à Monsieur William McGillivray un bon interprète Sauteux, honnête homme et

intrépide avec les nations. L'intérêt de la Compagnie le demande absolument, vu que, tous les automnes, il faut absolument verser du rhum avant l'arrivée des effets pour faire des vivres. Et qu'est-ce que deux hommes pour répondre quelquefois à quarante ou cinquante Sauvages pris de boisson et désignés au mal. S'il était possible de réunir tous les Français du poste dans de pareils moments, il n'y aurait rien à appréhender, mais, malheureusement, ils sont encore dans le portage, et Bazinet est dans ce temps de calamité, tantôt dans un village, tantôt dans un autre pour attraper un sac de bled (1).

“ Mais ” me direz-vous, “ comment fait celui-là ? ”. Je vous dirai qu'il ne court aucun risque parcequ'il arrive à un village, je suppose, avec un baril de rhum ; il y trouve les Sauvages à jeun ; il leur fait donner 10 à 11 sacs de bled pour lesquels il donne son baril et, aussitôt, il part et se trouve débarrassé d'eux ; mais il n'en est pas ainsi au Fort (2).

Durocher, un de mes hommes, arriva ici hier à trois heures 14, mardi. après midi avec le cadet des enfants de M. Mi..... Cadotte, que je demandai à son père au Fort Kamanaitiquoya. Il vient pour passer l'hiver avec moi afin d'apprendre à lire, et pour me servir d'interprète au besoin. Si je lui apprends le français, en revanche, m'apprendra-t-il le Saulteux. Son père est venu lui-même l'amener au Portage avec M. Léon St. Germain, qui passa outre pour aller à Latonaganne y faire du bled.

Racicot m'a envoyé un baril double force par Durocher, prévoyant bien que j'en aurais besoin ; il m'a écrit et m'apprend que le Général Chorette est enfin arrivé, le 8 du courant, au Portage avec son aide-de-camp, Lalancette et dix hommes obligés au travail. Ils ont soixante pièces de traite destinées pour ce poste ; Racicot dit les avoir comptées.... Ils ont tiré à plomb sur M. Cadotte lorsqu'il passa près d'eux sur le Lac Supérieur, mais je suppose qu'ils étaient ivres alors.

Arrivée de
Chorette
pour les X
Y.

(1) Folle avoine.

(2) On prodiguait partout les boissons enivrantes pendant la lutte contre les X Y.

Je pense, d'après toutes les apparences, qu'aucun d'eux n'est entré dans la Rivière des Sautaux, et j'en suis fâché, car plus leur butin serait dispersé, plus ils auraient gaspillé et moins ils auraient été à craindre. Tout ce que me dirent les Sauvages de M. Cadotte à ce sujet lorsque j'étais dans le lac avec eux, se trouve bien faux, car les trois canottées entrent ici, et un nommé Lamarche est arrivé du Grand Portage avec une autre canottée pour travailler contre M. Cadotte à la Pointe. J'ai renvoyé ce matin Durocher retrouver ses compagnons de voyage. Nous n'avons rien pris ce matin aux filets..... une journée d'abondance et dix de disette !!!

16, jeudi.

J'ai aujourd'hui donné à Gauthier du butin pour les pelletteries qu'il avait en magasin; je ne puis l'envoyer tendre parce que sa femme est en mal d'enfant. Il me dit, hier au soir, à la veillée, qu'il n'irait jamais au Fort Kamanaitiquoya s'il savait ne pas y trouver Monsieur Sayer; qu'il espérait tout de ce gentilhomme, protection, &c., &c., et qu'il aimerait mieux descendre la Rivière des Sautaux ce printemps dans l'espérance d'y trouver des gens de Michilimakinac (1), et de s'équiper d'eux. Je le tranquilisai et lui fis prendre d'autres résolutions, lui disant que s'il agissait ainsi, c'était prouver évidemment qu'il était coupable et que son bon était de venir au Fort Kamanaitiquoya s'expliquer avec nos Messieurs de tout ce qui s'était passé, &c., &c.; il a fini par dire comme moi, et il est résolu d'y aller pour demander grâce.

17, vendredi.

Climat.

Il fait une chaleur excessive, telle qu'il n'en a pas fait de l'été, et, chose extraordinaire, il gèle souvent les nuits, ce qui, selon mon opinion, n'est pas souverain pour la récolte; et l'on se

(1) Compagnie de traiteurs à laquelle les Bourgeois faisaient opposition au sud du Lac Supérieur. Cette compagnie se réunit à celle de M. John Jacob Astor quelques années plus tard.

passerait facilement de la maladie, avec la disette..... Oh ! ^{Il est dé-}malheureux gens du Lac du Flambeau ! tout est contre vous ^{gouté du service.} autres Manger peu, travailler beaucoup ; quelques fois malades, incertains de faire des retours, des reproches à craindre des Bourgeois, inquiétudes pour les effets qui sont hors du fort, des Sauvages à contenter et des adversaires à surveiller. Quelle vie!!! “ Pauvre Malhiot ! quand sera-tu débarrassé d’un si “ pesant fardeau ? J’ai tiré ton horoscope ; si celui qui t’a tou- “ jours protégé jusqu’à présent et servi de second père continue “ avec bonté ses bonnes grâces et te couvre de son manteau, tu “ seras à l’abri du temps et pleinement récompensé, sous peu, “ de tous tes travaux et malaises.”

Bazinet est arrivé du Ouisseconsaint hier au soir à 6 heures. ^{19, diman-}Ses retours ne sont pas ce que je m’en étais promis, mais si tous ^{che.} mes envois d’ici au printemps rendent autant, je n’aurai pas ^{Faibles} beaucoup à me plaindre. Il rapporte que les Sauvages se sont ^{“retours”.} dardés dans la boisson et que lui-même a été au moment d’être tué sans le secours de “ l’Outarde”. Il ne cesse de me faire des louanges de ce bon Sauvage ; qu’il n’a pas voulu goûter au rhum, et que tout le temps que les Sauvages étaient ivres, il est resté armé, se promenant de long en large devant la porte de la tente.

Pas un diable n’entend donner trois peaux de chevreuil pour un plus, et, pour ne pas les rebuter, je suis obligé de me conformer à mon adversaire qui en prend deux pour un plus. Nous venons d’entendre plusieurs coups de fusil du côté du fort de Chorette, ce qui nous fait présumer que Sa Seigneurie vient de mettre pied à terre.

La femme du vieux “ *La Chouette* ” et une de ses filles sont ^{20, lundi.} arrivées ce matin ; j’eus d’elles quelques peaux de chevreuil et 2 peaux d’ours. Deux heures après leur arrivée, elles furent se promener chez Chorette mais furent jetées dehors par Lalancette qui était alors sotil comme un cochon. Il leur dit : “ Allez !

“ allez ! à votre Père le *Grand Traiteur*. Qu’il vous donne à boire ;
 “ pour nous, nous sommes des esclaves et nous n’avons point
 “ de rhum ”.....Pauvres Besthias ! ne croient-ils pas, comme
 les Sauvages, que je suis vraiment un des associés du Nord-
 Ouest !

23, jeudi.

Hier, à huit heures du soir, Chorette passa ici et dit à Bazinet
 n’avoir pu voir les Sauvages ; nous pensons que les blessés sont
 morts, et que c’est pourquoi ils retardent. Je crois renvoyer
 demain audevant d’eux pour m’assurer du peu de vivres qu’ils
 ont. J’ai appris ce matin par plusieurs Sauvages qu’un nommé
 Létang était entré dans la Rivière des Sauteurs avec une canotée ;
 c’est ce qui achève de me persuader que les 60 pièces que Cho-
 rette a avec lui sont destinées pour ce poste.

24, vendre-
 di.

Gauthier ayant été demandé par Chorette d’aller chez lui, y
 fut ce soir avec ma permission pour savoir ce qu’il voulait ; j’ai
 en même temps, voulu l’éprouver et savoir s’il boirait, mais j’ai
 la consolation d’annoncer qu’il est revenu bien sobre et je me
 plais à chimériser qu’il tiendra les promesses qu’il m’a faites.

Nous sommes menacés de jeûne parceque les Sauvages veulent
 absolument aller en guerre ; en conséquence, ils mettront la plus
 grande partie de leurs bled en cache et nous nous trouverons
 avec très peu, qu’il nous faudra acheter au prix de l’or.

25, samedi.

Investure
 d’habit.

Trente canots ont arrivé ici à midi ; les Sauvages de Chorette
 me firent présent de 3 sacs de folle avoine, pour lesquels je leur
 donnai un gros baril de rhum et une brasse de tabac. J’habillai
 le “ Muffle d’Orignal ” et lui fis faire la harangue suivante :

“ Mon Parent,

“ Je veux bien oublier ce que tu as fait l’année passée et croire
 “ qu’il n’y a rien de ta faute si nous n’avons pas eu tout ton
 “ plus ; mais n’agis pas de même à l’avenir. L’habit que je te
 “ donne aujourd’hui doit te montrer le chemin que tu dois.

“ suivre..... Je me fie à toutes tes promesses ; ne sois pas
 “ double. Je désirerais non seulement ton plus, mais encore
 “ ton bled ; j’ai bien des enfants à nourrir ! d’ailleurs, ce serait
 “ gâter ton corps que d’en porter un seul grain à l’autre fort.
 “ Mes ordres de notre Père qui est à Kamanaitiquoya était pour
 “ toi comme pour tous les autres ; je ne devais rien te donner
 “ cet automne et attendre que je te connusse. Mais, d’après ce que
 “ tu viens de me dire et ce que m’ont dit les Français, le tout
 “ m’oblige à faire ce que je fais. Prends donc courage, et pense
 “ à ton Fort ! ”

Je donnai 4 barils de quatre pots et un de six, à ces différents Sauvages pour rien, parce qu’ils sont dévoués au Fort et de bons chasseurs.

.....
 J’envoie Bazinet audevant de mes gens dans le Portage, avec 27, lundi.
 deux de ses beaux-frères, pour m’apporter 4 barils, double force.

Plusieurs Sauvages de Chorette vinrent ici hier au soir pour 28, mardi.
 avoir du rhum et agir de force. Pendant longtemps, je dirai
 comme dit le bas peuple Canadien, *Je ne savais pas si c’était du*
lard ou du cochon que je mangeais..... J’étais seul avec
 Gauthier, et ils étaient au moins 15 crâbles tous armés ; celui
 qui n’avait pas son couteau ou sa lance, avait une roche ou un
 bâton, mais heureusement que nous en avons été quittes, tous
 ensemble, à nous chanter pouilles et nous faire des menaces. Le
 “ Taureau ” arrive et nous informe que “ l’Outarde ” doit ar-
 river sous peu.

.....
 Les Sauvages ont été en médecine (1) toute la nuit et ne 30, jeudi.
 cessent de fumer pour la guerre.

“ L’Outarde ” est enfin arrivé, à midi, avec le monde de 15 ³¹, vendre-
 canots à sa suite. Je n’ai pas un seul coup de rhum à lui pré-^{di.}

(1) Jonglerie.

Répriman-
de par
l'Outarde.

senter. M'ayant demandé où était Bazinet, je lui dis qu'il était allé au Portage et qu'il ne serait de retour que cette nuit, ou la nuit qui vient, parcequ'il redoutait de passer, le jour, au village du Lac du Flambeau et d'être pillé; que nous avions été au moment d'être tués etc. Il sortit aussitôt précipitamment et fit la harangue suivante: " Vous autres! gens du Lac du Flambeau, qu'avez vous fait! Pourquoi êtes vous venus interboliser mon Traiteur et l'avez vous menacé de le tuer et piller son butin? Je ne l'ai pas fait demander pour qu'il fut le jouet des Sauvages, ou qu'il fut mis à la chaudière (1) par vous autres. Vous avez votre Traiteur: tirez de lui vos besoin. Il a du rhum: qu'il vous en donne et faites vous en donner, il en a, etc., etc. " Tout le temps je l'envisageais: il avait l'air d'un soldat! Il rentra un moment après et me dit: " Non! non! Bazinet ne sera pas pillé, " et, aussitôt, il commanda avec autorité trois jeunes gens pour aller audevant de lui.

SEPTEMBRE

2, diman-
che.

" L'Outarde " me dit hier qu'il ferait tout ce qui dépendrait de lui pour empêcher les Sauvages d'aller en guerre, parce que, s'ils y allaient, je ne ferais point de paquets. Il pleut depuis hier à midi et Bazinet ne resout pas; les Sauvages s'en ennuiant encore plus que moi.

3, lundi.

Bazinet est arrivé hier soir à 4 heures avec le butin qu'il était allé chercher. J'habillai l' " Outarde " et lui donnai son pavillon, ainsi qu'à la " Grande Loutre. " Je donnai un capot galonné au " Grand Canard " et un autre au Michinaois (2) de " La Loutre ", et, à chacun, sa part de rhum. Je fis faire la harangue suivante à " l'Outarde ".

" Mon Parent,

Discours
d'investi-
ture d'ha-
bit.

" L'habit que je viens de te mettre sur toi est envoyé du Grand Traiteur; c'est par cet habillement qu'il sait distinguer les

(1) A l'obligation de les " traiter " ou de les nourrir.

(2) Lieutenant, aide-de-camp.

“ plus considérés d’une nation. Le Pavillon est une vraie marque de Chefrie dont tu dois te faire gloire, car nous n’en donnons pas aux premiers venus des Sauvages. Il faut être ce que tu es pour l’avoir, c’est à dire, aimer les Français comme tu fais, veiller à leur conservation et leur faire faire des paquets.

“ Mes ordres étaient de ne te rien donner cet automne et d’attendre au printemps afin de te connaître, mais, d’après tout le bien que j’ai ouï dire de toi par les Français, je n’ai pas hésité un moment à te rendre glorieux, convaincu que tu seras toujours le même pour le Fort ; que tu auras soin de mes jeunes gens ; qu’aucun chien ne les morde (2) et qu’ils ne reviennent jamais honteux lorsqu’ils iront à tes loges.

“ C’est à toi, comme premier chef de l’endroit, à faire tous tes efforts pour que les Sauvages viennent tous en traite ici ce printemps ; ce sera pour toi une gloire de renvoyer les canots pleins au Grand Portage.

“ Ressouviens-toi que le nom du Grand Traiteur est sur le pavillon. Partout où tu iras, n’importe auquel de ses Forts, tu y seras reçu les bras ouverts, et il ne peut te donner une plus grande marque de son amitié. Il a écouté tes plaintes et il est bien fâché que Gauthier ait bu ton rhum l’année passée ; je puis t’assurer, camarade, qu’il n’en sera pas ainsi cette année.

“ Et, vous autres tous, regardez moi ! Voyez le Traiteur qui vous est envoyé ! Je suis celui que vous avez fait demander. J’ai reçu, cet été, trois paroles de trois chefs des prairies pour retourner hyverner sur leurs terres, mais je m’y suis refusé, pour laisser dire vrai à notre Grand Traiteur, qui a voulu m’envoyer ici pour vous faire charité et non pour être méprisé. Cependant, je n’ai aucun reproche à vous faire parceque voilà la première fois que nous nous voyons. Soyez donc dévoués

(2) Qu’il ne leur arrive malheur.

“ pour votre Fort, ayez en soin ; gardez en les portes, et je
 “ porterai de bonnes nouvelles de vous autres à votre Père, ce
 “ printemps.

4, mardi. Nous eûmes querelle toute la journée avec les Sauvages du
 Querelle de Lac du Flambeau ; lances, couteaux, haches, &c., tout était en
 Sauvages. jeu. Ils firent une brèche au Fort, cassèrent une des portes et,
 sans le secours de “ l'Outarde,” de “ l'Epaule de Canard ” et de
 deux ou trois jeunes gens qui étaient bien sobres dans le
 moment, certainement il y aurait eu du sang de répandu, même
 de la mortalité, soit d'une part ou de l'autre. “ L'Outarde ” eut
 la tête fracassée d'un coup de bâton, ainsi qu'un de ses jeunes
 gens. J'ai remercié Dieu de n'avoir pas eu un couteau pendant
 ce carnage, car bien certainement il aurait tué ; ils étaient 5 ou
 6 après lui, et je croyais à tout moment le voir passer de ce
 monde à l'autre ; il avait réellement l'air d'un enragé, poussant
 des cris à faire frayer, et me disant de temps à autre : *Prends*
courage, mon Père ! fesse partout, assomme ! tue ! C'est
 après une querelle de deux heures que nous sommes venus à
 bout de mettre les carnassiers dehors du Fort.

5, mer- Les Sauvages du Lac du Flambeau n'ont fini de faire
 credi. leur train qu'hier au soir à neuf heures, et, pour signer le traité
 de paix, je leur ai donné un baril de 4 pots et une brassée de
 tabac. La chose ne plaisait qu'à demi à “ l'Outarde ” qui voulait
 absolument recommencer la guerre. Aujourd'hui tout est
 calme. Ils dorment d'un profond sommeil. Ces Sauvages du
 Lac du Flambeau ne sont point du parti de “ l'Outarde.”

6, jeudi. J'envoie Bazinet verser un baril de rhum aux loges. “ L'Ou-
 tarde ” et 5 de ses jeunes gens sont continuellement dans le
 Fort, bien sobres, ainsi que “ l'Epaule de Canard,” pour empêcher
 et prévenir toutes querelles qui pourraient survenir.

7, ven- La fin de cette boisson a été bien tranquille, nous avons dormi
 credi. depuis une heure jusqu'à ce matin ; nous en avons grand

besoin, car nous ne nous étions pas couché depuis le 3 du courant.

.....
Les Sauvages commencent à partir. Puissent-ils l'être tous ^{10, lundi.} bientôt ! " L'Outarde " partit hier avec ses jeunes gens pour aller faire son bled au lac de la Truite, où est son village.

.....
Une partie des crâbles qui sont campés ici près du Fort va se ^{12, mercredi.} camper au village du Lac du Flambeau en attendant que mes gens soient arrivés,

.....
J'eus, hier, 4 sacs du bled de Folle Avoine, pour lesquels je lui ^{14, vendredi.} donnai un demi baril de rhum et une demi brassée de tabac. Le rhum a été bu la nuit dernière au loges du Lac du Flambeau, en dépit de tout ce que j'ai pu faire et dire, car j'espérais que le diable de Sauvage l'emporterait sur ses terres comme il me l'avait promis. Mais, heureusement, ils ne sont point venus m'en demander d'autre, tout soûls qu'ils étaient. Grand Miracle !!!

.....
Trois des jeunes gens du vieux " Lachouette " sont arrivés ^{16, dimanche.} hier à quatre heures de l'après-midi, et quatre autres du Lac de la Folle, dont j'ai eu 3 sacs de folle. Il pleut et vente extraordinairement aujourd'hui ; les Sauvages nos accablent, nous ne pouvons pas tendre nos filets et nous mangeons continuellement notre bled à l'eau..... Bon et beau fricot !..... les chiens y maigrissent !

.....
Il a plu depuis dimanche jusqu'à hier au midi ; ce matin, ^{21, vendredi.} Chorette est arrivé avec quatre de ses hommes chargés et nous apprend que les portages sont horriblement mauvais.

.....
Je reçus une lettre de mes gens ce matin ; ils sont encore ^{23, dimanche.} dans le grand Portage. Par leur paresse, ils ont manqué de

vivre et en sont venus traiter au village de la Tortue. J'envoie Bazinet au-devant d'eux pour les précipiter et leur écris l'épître suivante :

“ Racicot,

Répri-
mande à ses
hommes.

“ Je viens de recevoir la vôtre par ‘La Loche,’ et suis surpris
“ du contenu. Quoi ! des gens de quatorze et quinze cents
“ livres de gages mettent des deux mois dans le Portage de
“ Montréal !..... Enfants que vous êtes ! gens de peu de fiâte !....
“ Des hommes montant de Montréal cette année en eussent fait
“ autant que vous autres !.. ... Vous n’avez pas assez de con-
“ ception pour savoir le tort que vous faites à la Compagnie par
“ votre retardement. Vous vous trouvez aujourd’hui dans les
“ mauvais chemins, à qui en est-ce la faute ? dites, dites que
“ vos cœurs ne sont pas placés où ils devraient l’être, et que vous
“ n’avez pas voulu faire votre devoir.

“ Vous, Racicot, qui touchiez au moment d’avoir une place et
“ d’entrer en charge, que n’avez-vous maîtrisé et fait marcher
“ les autres de force ou d’amitié ? Sans doute, vous étiez bien
“ aise de dormir comme les autres la face au soleil..... Si vous
“ avez manqué de vivres, c’est encore de votre faute, et qu’au-
“ riez-vous à dire si, présentement, je vous faisais payer le
“ rhum que vous avez donné pour en avoir ! Vous me demandez
“ Durocher ; faites miracle ; guérissez-le, et il ira bassiner vos
“ lits ! ”

F. Vt. M. l. o.

26, mer-
credi.

.....
Les Sauvages m’accablent et mes vivres passent comme de la paille au feu : j’ai hâte que Bazinet arrive pour me débarrasser d’eux ; les crâbles sont si à tas dans ma maison, surtout depuis cinq à six jours, qu’ils m’ont donné de la vermine, et plus je change de chemise, plus j’en ai ; Gauthier de même. Nous n’avons pas le temps de mettre une chaudière de bled au feu,

que 50 de ces chiens sont autour de nous en demandant avant même qu'il soit bouilli. Nous aurons bientôt la barbe aussi longue que des boucs et le farcin nous mange.

" L'Epaule-de-canard " vient d'arriver avec 30 plus en castor ; 27, jeudi. les pièges qu'il a eus de moi, il y a quelques jours, sont cassés.

Mes gens sont enfin arrivés hier au soir à 4 heures. Le butin ^{28, vendre-di.} n'a pas été plus tôt entré dans le magasin, que je me suis mis à déballer et à donner à crédit aux Sauvages du Vieux Désert qui sont partis ce matin à une heure. " L'Aigle " m'a laissé son ^{Gage de sincérité.} manche, avec un collier en porcelaine pour le remettre ce printemps à M. MacGillivray, et m'a dit qu'il était un homme franc, et qu'il laissait son manche au Fort pour marque de sa sincérité. Je lui donnai un gros baril et lui fis faire la harangue suivante :

" Mon Parent,

" C'est avec grande joie que je fume dans ton manche et que " je reçois ta parole. Notre Grand Traiteur à Kamanaitiquoya " l'acceptera, j'espère, ce printemps, avec satisfaction et t'en-verra une marque de son amitié si tu continues à bien faire. " Prends donc courage ! ne sois qu'un, et ne regarde le " Fort des X Y que de loin si tu veux parvenir à ce que tu " désires " .

Je donnai aussi un capot galonné à Barsaloux avec un demi baril de rhum ; un gros baril à " l'Outarde " , à commission, pour le verser à son village pour du bled.

J'ai oublié de marquer ci-haut que Bazinet, passant au village de la Tortue avec tout le butin, y versa deux gros baril de rhum avec lesquels il ne fit que deux sacs de bled. Mon baril de shrub lui fut volé et il donna deux pintes de double force pour le ravoir (1). Il donna aussi à crédit à plusieurs Sauvages auxquels je n'aurais pas voulu donner une aiguille.

(1) L'objet volé est perdu, et il faut payer pour le reprendre à un tiers. Voir : Journal de M. W. McGillivray.

Je saisisrai cette occasion pour faire mention de Bazinet selon son mérite et dire qu'il est vraiment un honnête homme, soigneux au possible pour le butin le long d'une route, ambitieux pour la marche, intéressé pour la Compagnie, travaillant dans un fort, à l'excès, fameux coureur de drouine (1), mais trop timide avec les Sauvages, car un crâble, à le regarder un peu fixement, lui ferait donner ses culottes. Cela étant, je soutiendrai qu'il serait très capable sous un autre et ne vaut rien pour être en prime dans aucun poste. Il est bon coureur de drouine parce que la pacotille n'est jamais forte et il trouve toujours à se défendre sur celui qui l'emploie.

, samedi. Barseloux est revenu ce matin ainsi que la "Grue Blanche." Ils disent avoir naufragé, et je suis obligé de leur donner de nouveau à crédit pour ne pas tout perdre et ils me laissent leurs colliers en gages. J'eus aujourd'hui du fils de "La Pierre-à-Affiler" quatre sacs de bled pour lesquels je lui donnai un demi baril de rhum. Je donne un régal à mes gens.

, di-
anche.

Mes gens se sont bien soûlés hier et, par crainte, les Sauvages ont cessé de boire. J'envoie aujourd'hui trois de mes hommes au Lac de la Truite pour y chercher du bled, et deux autres chez le vieux "La Chouette" dans le même but. Chorette est parti ce matin pour aller rejoindre ses gens dans le Portage.

.....

, mer-
redi.

Le vieux "La Chouette" est arrivé hier avec sa bande, j'ai obtenu de lui de ne pas boire dans mon Fort; il est parti ce matin bien satisfait de son Pavillon ainsi que toute sa suite. Quantité de Sauvages du Lac du Flambeau étaient au bord de l'eau au moment où il est embarqué et il ne leur a point donné un seul filet, d'après mes supplications.

(1) Courir la drouine; aller au-devant des Sauvages avec des marchandises, au lieu de les attendre aux postes.

Je viens de faire partir Bazinet pour le Ouisseconsaint avec ⁴, jeudi. l'équipement de 3½ pièces de drap, 4 barils double force, un de poudre, etc., etc. J'envoie Racicot avec lui parce que la plus grande partie des Sauvages auxquels j'ai donné crédit vont hiverner là, et il y sera trop nécessaire, comme il sait lire, pour différencier tous les crédits, aussi pour secourir Bazinet dans les boissons, car, je le répète avec chagrin, le pauvre diable n'a pas plus de résolution qu'un enfant.

Je viens de faire l'inventaire des pelleteries que j'ai traitées ⁵, vendredi. depuis mon arrivée ici et j'ai compté :

528 peaux de chevreuil

840 Rats musqués

107lb de Castors

44 loutres

16 peaux d'ours

7 martres

1 foutreau

le tout formant peut-être seize paquets. Cette traite d'automne m'a extraordinairement rogné mes marchandises, de sorte que je me vois dans l'incapacité d'envoyer dans la Rivière des Sauteux. Il aurait certainement fallu, sans trop exagérer, l'assortiment de 16 pièces de drap pour faire face à mes adversaires et les écraser, et j'oserais gager que Chorette ne sortirait pas dix paquets de tous ses envois si j'avais le butin nécessaire pour envoyer contre lui dans la Rivière des Sauteux.

.....

"L'Outarde" est arrivé ici lundi dernier au soir bien tard, devant ¹¹, jeudi. partir le lendemain. Il me dit que "l'Epaule de Canard" était parti pour aller rejoindre Bazinet à son hyvernement ; mais, au lieu de partir, "l'Outarde" s'est soulé chez Chorette et n'est devenu sobre qu'aujourd'hui. Pour m'en débarrasser, et afin de ne pas perdre les avances que je lui avais faites, je lui donnai encore un demi baril de rhum pour rien, pour lui et sa bande,

et il est parti avec beaucoup de présents de Chorette. Cet homme n'aurait jamais dû avoir un habit, encore moins un pavillon. La boisson le commande ; il est trop importun, et une demi canotée ne suffirait pas pour le contenter. Les Sauvages pillèrent un demi baril de rhum double force à Chorette hier soir, et "l'Outarde" était à leur tête.

, samedi. Deux jeunes gens des Lacs, envoyés par le vieux "La Chouette", arrivèrent ici hier au matin ; j'eus d'eux cent et dix rats musqués et deux castors. J'envoie chez lui George Yarns, son beau père, pour chercher les barils qu'il a à moi, et lui porter de la munition et quelque peu de marchandises qu'il fait demander, à commission, pour traiter avec les Sauvages des Lacs.

, diman- Tout est donc calme à la fin !..... Tous ces visages
e. noirs sont partis et entrés en hivernement..... Que Dieu les conduise ! Nous allons donc recommencer la pèche et avoir quelques pièces de poisson pour assaisonner notre bled ! il est temps, mon estomac s'en allait en défaillance.

lundi. N'ayant plus de crédits à faire, je fis ce matin l'inventaire du butin qui me reste et qui consiste en

3 pc $\frac{1}{2}$ de drap com : et assortiment

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ Rol de tabac

6 Barils, double force

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ de poudre ; plomb, balles, etc., etc.

Encore autant de butin, et j'aurais pu envoyer contre Chorette dans la Rivière des Sautaux ; partager ce qui me reste en deux, ce serait gâter le commerce.

.....

mer- Mes hommes viennent d'arriver de chez Chorette ; ils m'ap-
di. prennent qu'il est parti pour la Rivière des Sautaux avec deux canots batards (1) chargés et 6 hommes obligés à sa suite. Ils disent avoir vu 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ ballots de marchandises.

(1) Le plus petit canot de transport du Nord-Ouest.

J'envoie Durocher à la Pointe avertir M. Cadotte que je ne puis envoyer contre Chorette à la Rivière aux Sauteurs ; d'y envoyer lui-même et le faire suivre pas à pas et, même, de le conduire ainsi jusqu'au printemps. Je fais demander aussi une scie de long pour renouveler mon fort en bois de sciage et me mettre à l'abri des insultes une autre année.

.....
Ayant été trop occupé jusqu'à présent, je n'ai pu parler des Sauvages qu'à la volée et très imparfaitement, et, pour ne pas oublier ce que j'ai à dire d'eux, je reviens au chapitre. Servons-nous donc de l'huile tandis qu'il y en a dans la lampe.

“ L'Outarde ” est un homme très imparfait..... je ne puis pas dire qu'il soit coquin et qu'il ait le cœur noir, mais il est dans le chemin qui y conduit, et je souhaite pour le bien public, tant pour les Sauvages que pour nous, ainsi que pour le profit du Nord-Ouest, que le pavillon que je lui ai donné lui serve de linceul.

Le vieux “ La Chouette ” va de mieux en mieux et travaille avec intérêt pour le Fort, mais il lui manquait la bravoure pour mériter le pavillon qu'il a eu.

“ L'Epaule-de-Canard ” est le seul Sauvage qui ait mérité son pavillon, et il ne lui a pas été donné ! C'est un Sauvage sobre, brave, aimé des autres, aimant les Français, capable de se sacrifier pour eux, bon commissionnaire, point demandant, se contentant de tout ce qu'on lui donne et fameux chasseur. J'ai cru reconnaître un même homme dans le beau frère de Bazinet, du nom de “ La Loche ”, mais il n'est pas chasseur et encore jeune. Il me fit entendre, un jour, qu'il espérait parvenir à un tel degré, alors je lui répondis qu'il fallait bien des bonnes qualités pour être couvert d'un habit, etc. ; que la place d'un chef était malaisée à tenir, et qu'il fallait qu'un homme méprisât sa vie pour l'être ; alors, il me dit qu'il était capable de tout, etc. Je trouvai à propos de lui répondre que c'était une bien longue échelle, qu'il

en avait fait le premier échelon et qu'il avait encore loin pour aller au bout.

Il y en a encore quelques autres que je pourrais mettre au nombre des bons Sauvages, mais en général, si je pouvais tous les mettre dans une poche et savoir que Lucifer en voulut, je les lui donnerais tous pour un denier !..... Si autrefois ils étaient des agneaux, aujourd'hui ce sont des loups enragés et des diables déchainés. Ils sont en général doués de tous les vices du genre humain et ne croient point bien vivre, s'ils ne vivent mal.

Les Fran-
çais.

Après avoir dit ce que je pense des crâbles, je vais présentement traiter des Français. J'ai dit ce qui en était de Bazinet; quant à Gauthier, j'aurais grand tort de m'en plaindre. Il ne boit plus et se comporte en honnête homme. A la première boisson des Sauvages, cet automne, il a comme faibli, et a paru manquer de fermeté, mais depuis, ça été tout autrement, il agit de son mieux, et s'il est rejeté de la Compagnie, les trois quarts peuvent être bannis de la Synagogue.

Tous les autres hommes qui sont sous ma dépendance agissent en bons garçons et sont beaucoup plus polis, beaucoup plus soumis et un peu plus intéressés que les gens du Nord.

NOVEMBRE.

6, mardi.

Mes gens ont fini de bûcher leur bois de chauffage et demain ils commencent à équarrir les pieux du fort.

.....
.....(1)

DÉCEMBRE

20, jeudi.

Deux des Sauvages furent malgré moi, hier au soir, se promener chez Lalancette pour lui demander à acheter du fil à rets. Ils en sont revenus à trois heures et demie et m'ont dit que Lalancette était donné après mes gens. Je renvoie Martineau

(1) Ce journal, du 7 novembre au 20 décembre, ne renferme rien d'intéressant. Il a fait maigre chère, prenant à peine assez de poisson pour "assaisonner leurs chaudières de bled.

aujourd'hui à leurs loges avec une chaudière et deux mouchoirs de soie qu'ils me demandent pour traiter.

Martineau et Bruno sont arrivés à cinq heures du soir et ont apporté 24 plus, la plus grande partie en castors. George, Du-rocher et le Petit Cadotte sont restés aux loges. Martineau me dit que Lalancette a donné une chaudière, la première du nid (1), pour deux plus et demi ; il a aussi donné une rets neuve pour vingt rats musqués et une autre pour une peau d'ourson viciée. Les Sauvages demandent encore des vivres, du plomb et quelques autres petits articles.

Lalancette était si soûl avant-hier qu'il a été obligé de coucher en chemin et n'a pu arriver aux loges qu'à midi, et mes gens y étaient arrivés dans la nuit. Martineau m'a juré que ce Lalancette était tombé vingt fois, le moins, le long de la route et qu'il avait fait des écarts et des ravages aussi grands qu'un orignal qui est resté longtemps dans le même endroit.

.....
Mes gens sont enfin tous arrivés aujourd'hui et ont apporté quelques castors. Ils disent que Lalancette a dépensé un baril de 4 pots de double force aux loges sans pouvoir attraper une seule martre et, si ce n'eût été de sa chaudière et de ses deux rets, il serait revenu les mains vides, car les Sauvages ont attendu une journée, croyant que je leur en enverrais.

Le petit Cadotte est d'une grande capacité avec les Nations, quoique très jeune. Mes hommes disent qu'il s'est donné un tourment extraordinaire ; il a pillé la plus grande parti du Plus des Sauvages aussitôt qu'il vit venir Lalancette sur le lac, et leur disait devant Lalancette même : " Ne traitez point avec lui ; " il savait que vous jeûniez et il n'a pas daigné vous apporter " un seul grain de bled ; c'est un cochon ! il fait un dieu de son

21, ven-
dredi.

23, di-
manche.

Le petit
Cadotte
promet !

(1) La plus petite ; ces chaudières étaient emboîtées les unes dans les autres, afin d'économiser les transports.

“ ventre. Il verrait crever les Sauvages avant que de leur “ donner un verre d’eau, etc., etc.” Je saisisrai cette occasion pour dire que cet enfant promet beaucoup ; il a de très bons sentiments ; il est poli, posé, ménager, etc. Lorsqu’il arriva ici, cet automne, il ne connaissait pas une seule lettre de l’alphabet, à peine articulait-il quelques mots français, et aujourd’hui, il lit aussi bien qu’en enfant de 4 ans d’école. Il sait ses prières, son catéchisme ; enfin, encore un pas, et il est un prodige.

.....
(1)

FÉVRIER.

4, lundi.

Chorette est venu me rendre visite ; je l’ai fait rester à souper avec moi. Il m’a dit que “ La Pierre à affiler ” et ses jeunes gens préméditaient de me tuer ce printemps ; de m’en défilier, qu’il était certain de leur complot. Lui ayant demandé pourquoi, il me dit que c’était parce que Bazinet leur avait dit que je les avais tous donnés au Maître de la vie et qu’ils mourraient avant le printemps.

.....
(2)

MARS,

1, vendredi.

Je suis arrivé ici à 4 heures après nuit après une absence de deux jours chez le vieux “ Lachouette ”, d’où j’ai rapporté 10 castors, aussi, 7 maskinongés pour lesquels je donnai un baril et 4 pots. Nous avons pris aujourd’hui assez de poisson pour faire un repas.

Privations.

J’apprends, par deux jeunes gens qui viennent d’arriver, que le “ Muffle d’Original ”, un des Sauvages que j’habillai cet automne, a tellement jeûné cet hiver qu’il a été contraint de manger son paquet, ses chiens et même son fourreau de fusil, et que le “ Chef des Oiseaux ”, l’ayant trouvé par hasard, lui avait donné sub-

(1) Du 23 décembre au 4 février, le journal ne contient rien d’intéressant. La pêche fait tout à fait défaut.

(2) Le journal, du 5 février au 1 mars, est sans intérêt ; il n’y est question que du jeûne des Sauvages et des souffrances des Français, qui manquent de poisson.

sistance ; j'envoie au " Chef des Oiseaux " , une carotte de tabac (1)

.....

La " Tête Grise " arrive et campe près du fort avec toute sa ^{9, samedi.} clique. La femme de Gauthier ayant été ce matin chez Chorette pour chercher ses raquettes qu'un Sauvage lui avait prises, Lalancette lui dit tant de sottises que cette femme revint en pleurant. Gauthier y fut aussitôt et j'envoyai deux hommes avec lui. Il trouva Lalancette caché dans le grenier de sa maison, mais la honte l'obligeant à descendre, Gauthier le poigna et le battit tellement qu'il ne voit plus : mes deux autres hommes se déshabillèrent et firent appel au reste de la maisonnée, mais personne ne voulut prendre.

Ce soir, bien tard, le " Gros Aigle ", Sauvage du Vieux Désert, ^{13, mercre-} arriva ici ; Il vient nous chercher pour aller quérir mes crédits. ^{di.} Il vient de m'apprendre que Tremblé, que j'envoyai avec eux l'automne passé avec 90 plus de marchandises, est parti de leurs loges après avoir fondu le butin et s'en est allé chez Roy, à l'Anse, avec un beau paquet, et qu'ils ne l'ont point vu depuis. Ce Tremblé peut avoir laissé ses Sauvages vers le 2 ou le 3 de janvier.

J'envoie Gauthier avec Durocher au Vieux Desert pour avoir ^{14, jeudi.} mes crédits et traiter. Tous les Sauvages de cet endroit ont encore plus jeûné que les autres et n'ont presque rien ; à peine paieront-ils le quart de leurs crédits. J'envoie Martineau et Beaulieu à l'Anse avec un Sauvage, auquel je donne 20 plus pour ses peines. Je donne ordre à ces trois hommes de tâcher de ramener Tremblé et, s'ils ne peuvent y réussir, d'y piller au moins le paquet. Ce tour de coquin me fait extraordinairement tort, ça môte deux hommes pour 20 jours, le moins, et mon Fort reste en arrière ; cependant je ne désespère point de le

(1) Deux à trois livres de tabac.

faire planter avant de partir, mais, d'ici à vingt jours, l'absence de ces deux hommes me fera perdre du plus.

.....

i. " L'Outarde " arriva ici avec deux charges de viande dont il me fit présent ; je lui donnai pour six pots de rhum. Un moment après lui, arriva son beau-frère, maigre comme je n'ai jamais vu d'homme, et si affaibli par le jeûne que c'est à peine s'il pouvait mettre un pied en avant de l'autre. Le " Genou " arriva ensuite ; il me dit avoir tué trois orignaux et trois ours, de les envoyer chercher, mais, malheureusement, je n'ai qu'un homme et, encore, est-il malade. Lalancette doit aller chercher cette viande. Le " Genou " me conserve les peaux d'ours.

J'oubliai de dire que, le 14, il tonna et éclaira considérablement.

.....

Mes gens finissent de planter mon Fort, et c'est le plus beau d'aucun département sauvage. " Vive North-West Company ! Honneur à Malhiot !!!

" Le Vieux La Chouette, qui vient d'arriver, m'a fait présent de 4 pièces de viande, pour lesquelles je lui ai donné 5 chopines de rhum ; son fils, " Le Brulé " m'a payé son crédit et m'a donné une peau d'ours et je lui ait fait présent d'un demi baril de rhum, un autre demi-baril que je lui ai donné à commission, aussi, de l'ammunition et du tabac pour traiter avec les gens des Lacs. J'ai aussi donné à son père la même quantité de munition ; ces Sauvages travaillent tout-à-fait bien pour le Fort,..... et, comme ils sont rares !!!

Mes hommes scient la planche qu'il faut pour couvrir le bastion du Fort. Chorette donne une brasse de drap pour une peau d'ours ; le rhum est comme de l'eau, tant d'une part que de l'autre, mais Chorette commence à se plaindre et j'ai encore sept barils mêlés. Je n'ai presque plus de tabac et je crains fort d'en manquer avant de partir. Je manquerai aussi de marchan-

dises..... Je n'ai jamais connu, depuis onze ans que j'hiverne, un adversaire qui traite à aussi bon marché que Chorette. Je crois que Lucifer lui apporte des marchandises de Londres à mesure qu'il en a besoin.

.....
Le fils de " La-pierre-à-Affiler ", beaufrère de Chorette, arriva ^{26, vendredi.} ici hier au soir et me fit présent d'une loutre, 15 rats et 12 livres de sucre pour lesquels je lui donnai 4 pots de rhum. Il fut les boire chez Chorette avec l' " Ours " et " La Petite Racine ". Lorsqu'ils furent bien soûls, ils firent maison nette, manquèrent tuer Chorette, dardèrent Lalancette et défoncèrent le magasin. Ils enlevèrent deux loutres, pour lesquelles je leur donnai encore du rhum, ce matin, mais sans savoir qu'ils les avait pillées. Tout ce carnage est arrivé parce que Chorette leur avait promis du rhum pour leur plus, et qu'il n'en avait point.

Ils vinrent ici cette nuit dans le dessein de me faire donner de la boisson, mais nous les avons fait fuir en les frappant du haut du Fort avec des perches; dans leur rage, ils furent chercher leurs fusils, mais n'osèrent pas tirer et s'en retournèrent avec la honte de n'avoir pu réussir à rien.

Je remercierai Dieu tous les jours de m'avoir donné l'idée de faire un si beau fort, à l'épreuve de la balle et de toute insulte.

.....
St Germain vient d'arriver de la Pointe; il m'apprend, mais ^{MAL.} trop tard, que les deux Compagnies n'en font qu'une; j'ai en-2, ^{jeudi.} j'ai en-2, jeudi. gagé mes hommes!

.....
Les gens de guerre qui sont arrivés ici avant-hier, au nombre ^{10, vendredi.} de 17, sont allés chez Chorette et ont tué ses chiens et, cette après-midi, font festin aux dépens de ces chiens. Après m'en avoir fait manger, ils nous ont laissés, à mon grand plaisir, car mes provisions baissaient vite. J'envoie aujourd'hui 3 hommes chez Chorette pour chercher mon canot; il gaspille toujours, à

l'ordinaire et donne une brasse de drap pour une loutre ou deux plus en castor.

Les hommes ont bien travaillé.

J'attends de jour en jour un autre parti de guerre ; Dieu veuille qu'il ne soit pas si longtemps à m'importuner. J'attends aussi d'un jour à l'autre Bazinet ; il n'y a plus que lui qui me retienne ici et je crois que le fort que je lui ai ordonné de faire est la cause de son retardement. Je suis seul à garder le Fort avec Gauthier : mes gens n'ont pas encore eu une journée de repos depuis mon arrivée ici cet automne ; de tous les hommes qu'il peut y avoir dans les pays d'en haut, je crois qu'il n'y en a aucuns qui ont travaillé autant que les miens ; une maison de vingt pieds en carré, de pièces sur pièces, faite à quatre ; 70 cordes de bois buché, un fort scié, un bastion couvert, un désert pour y semer 8 barils de patates, et tous les voyages ça et là !!!

.....

.....

23, jeudi.

Nous avons fini les paquets à midi ; j'ai fait gommer les canots et suis parti du Fort à cinq heures après-midi, après avoir pris l'état de ce que j'ai laissé sous la charge de Gauthier. Beau temps ; tout mon monde en bonne santé..... Dieu soit avec nous, le long du voyage !

24, vendredi.

Le retour.

Chemin faisant, j'ai rencontré Chorette qui revenait du Lac Supérieur avec un demi baril de rhum qu'il porte à son beau-père. Tremblé a profité de son occasion pour venir me trouver ; le pauvre garçon me donne de très mauvaises raisons pour excuses et je crains pour lui au Grand Portage. Roy m'a écrit à son sujet, aussi, au sujet du commerce. Il a grand tort de se plaindre, car ce n'est pas chez ses Sauvages que j'ai envoyé Tremblé en traite, mais chez les miens qui prirent à crédit à mon Fort l'automne passé, et ce sont ces mêmes Sauvages qui envoient un manche à M. MacGillivray pour que je leur envoie plus de marchandises une autre année. M. Cadotte, aussi,

m'écrit et m'informe qu'il n'a pu faire parvenir ma lettre à M. MacGillivray, etc.

.....
 Nous avons fait, hier, le Portage des Six Poses et celui du village de la Tortue, et, à une heure cette après midi, nous sommes arrivés au Grand Portage de la Rivière Montréal, où, mon canot ayant crevé, nous sommes obligés de camper pour laisser sécher quatre paquets qui sont mouillés. Les deux portages que nous avons passés sont extraordinairement mauvais et les Sauvages me disent que celui-ci l'est encore plus. ^{26, diman- che.}

Il a mouillé toute la nuit passée, et nous n'avons pu commencer à porter qu'à dix heures, cependant, nous avons fait une assez bonne journée, étant venu camper à la Petite Rivière en deça de celle des Pins. Jamais le portage n'a été si mauvais, et les mouches nous dévorent. ^{27, lundi.}

Mes gens ont fait seize poses aujourd'hui, quoique très souvent ils aient eu de l'eau jusqu'aux genoux, aussi se plaignent-ils beaucoup ; nous campons à la Rivière aux Sapins. ^{29, mercre- di.}

Mes gens ont heureusement fini de bonne heure à porter, car ils commençaient à être fatigués. Le chemin est si mauvais et il y a tant de "renversis" que je m'écartai un heure de temps et, sans un fusil, je le serais encore. ^{30, jeudi.}

"L'Epaule de Canard" arriva à nous hier au soir ; il vient au Grand Portage voir M. MacGillivray. Nous avons été obligés, aujourd'hui, de faire un cajeu pour traverser la Rivière du Milieu et nous y campons. Il y a longtemps que je n'ai vu l'eau si haute, et je suis extraordinairement surpris de voir mes gens résister si longtemps. ^{31, vendre- di.}

.....
 La pluie nous empêche de porter ; nous n'avons fait que sept poses depuis vendredi. Les mouches sont par bilions ! la mauvaise nourriture nous affaiblit, et nous en manquerons complètement si le temps ne change pas. ^{2, diman- che.} JUIN.

3, lundi. Après que j'eusse écrit hier, le beau temps est venu et nous avons fait dix poses avec la moitié du bagage ; aujourd'hui, il mouille beaucoup et nous sommes tout-à-fait dégradés.

.....

4, mardi. Le " Canard " est parti ce matin pour le Lac Supérieur parce-
Privations. que nous n'avons plus de vivres que pour deux jours, à bien ménager, et aussi pour dire aux Sauvages de la Mauvaise Rivière de nous apporter du poisson, s'ils en ont.

Le temps est encore couvert et il tombe quelques grains de pluie de temps à autre, cependant mes gens portent, mais ils ont la précaution de couvrir les paquets avec leurs couvertes à chaque voyage. Il nous reste, pour tout aliment, dix pintes de bled non lescivé.

5, mercredi. Nous sommes aujourd'hui en vue du Lac Supérieur, mes gens ayant fait, hier, 21 poses et 20, aujourd'hui ; nous mangeons ce soir nos dernières pralines et, demain midi, nous espérons nous rendre au bout du portage.

6, jeudi. Nous avons enfin fini le portage à midi et quart, tous bien fatigués. Je ne partirai d'ici que demain pour laisser reposer mes gens. J'eus le bonheur d'avoir quatre éturgeons des Sauvages aujourd'hui, qui me conduiront, je l'espère, à la Pointe, où j'ai laissé un sac de bled en cache l'automne dernier. Le fils aîné de M. Cadotte est arrivé ici à trois heures après-midi avec une lettre de son père m'informant de la mort de M. Latour.

8, samedi. Je partis aujourd'hui de la Rivière Montréal et suis arrivé à la Pointe, fort de M. Cadotte. Ayant marché le long du lac, j'ai trouvé un poisson blanc à demi mangé par les aigles et à demi pourri, mais pas encore assez pour m'empêcher de le manger à la broche.

.....

10, lundi. J'ai fait préparer mon canot hier pour partir en compagnie des Messieurs Cadotte ; leurs gens étant arrivés de la Rivière

Mauvaise avec une canotée d'éturgeons, nous ne pouvions manquer; ça très bien fait, et aujourd'hui, à 10 heures, nous laissons la Pointe pour venir camper le soir à la Rivière Ciscaoutte.

.....

Mardi, à 3 heures du matin, nous laissons la rivière Cisca-^{15, samedi.}ouette et nous campions le même soir au Fond-du-Lac, où, ayant été dégradés par le vent et la pluie, M. Cotton voulut bien nous assister d'un sac de bled et d'une brassée de tabac. Jeudi, nous laissons le Fond-du-Lac pour venir camper à la Rivière aux Groseilles. Vendredi, nous campions à la Rivière à la Framboise, et aujourd'hui, après une longue journée à la voile, nous sommes venus camper en vue de l'Île du Grand Portage.

FIN.

MR JOHN M^cDONNELL

SOME ACCOUNT

OF THE

RED RIVER

(ABOUT 1797)

WITH EXTRACTS FROM HIS JOURNAL
1793-1798

THE RED RIVER

BY

JOHN M^cDONNELL ⁽¹⁾

OF THE NORTH-WEST COMPANY

After leaving the North-West Company's Fort at the entrance of river Ouinipique, we have nearly eighteen leagues of the lake of the name to coast along before coming to the entrance of the Red River.

This river enters Lake Ouinipique at its south-east corner by three different channels; the middle channel is the deepest and most practicable, the others are choked up by sand at their entrance into the Lake. It is lined with very tall reeds, the wood being only discernible at a distance. This middle branch is the road of all canoes, &c., that enter the river. All the branches join a league above the entrance, and, two leagues

(1) Mr. John McDonnell was a brother of Mr. Miles McDonnell, the first governor of Lord Selkirk's Red River Colony. He became a Partner of the North-West Company about 1796, and remained in the North-West till 1815. He then sold his share and settled at *Pointe Fortune*, in the township of Hawkesbury, where he kept a store and ran boats to Montreal.

Mr. McDonnell died at *Pointe Fortune*, leaving several children, who all died without issue, and he was buried in the Catholic cemetery of Rigaud. Mr. W. J. McDonnell, vice consul of France in Toronto, is his nephew.

higher, the banks—though still very low—begin to be covered with wood.

*Rivière
aux morts.*

Three leagues from the lake, the River *aux morts* enters the Red River on the north side. Here a large camp of Assiniboils, Crees and Sauteux were massacred by the Sioux or *Naudawesis*, the most powerful nation in all the interior country. Ever since this slaughter, the river has been called with propriety, *Rivière aux morts*.

*Fort à M.
Frobisher.*

Two or three leagues above *Rivière aux morts* is a clear spot on which Mr. Joseph Frobisher is said to have passed a winter, and is called, *Fort à M. Frobisher*.

The first rapid we came to is the *Sault à la Biche*, about three leagues above Mr. Frobisher's Fort and three leagues long. At low water it is a great obstacle to navigation, but at other times the men push up the canoes with setting poles.

Near the head of *Sault à la Biche*, the plains extend to the very brink of the river, but only in small openings of an acre and a half; the grass and other weeds are so tall, owing to the moisture of the soil, that it is very disagreeable walking. There is always plenty of water from the *Sault à la Biche* to the Forks, reckoned six leagues.

The Forks.

At the Forks, the remains of several old posts are still to be seen, some of which were built as far back as the time of the French Government. This place, as well as the *Rivière aux Morts*, is a favorite Indian encampment. On these plains we generally find some straggling Sauteux or *Pilleurs* from Lake Rouge, who generally have provisions to barter for liquor, *en passant*.

Here we leave the Red and enter the Assiniboil River, the smaller branch of the two, which is very shoal, full of sand banks, and one of the most crooked that fancy can conceive. A man on foot, who marches straight through the plains, in three hours time can go as far as the canoes in a day.

The Red River, properly so called, takes its waters near the ^{The Red River route.} Mississippi, and by it the southern traders from *La Prairie du Chien* enter the Assiniboil; but it is a long way about and very precarious, as they are forced to come thro' the territories of the Sioux, the most savage and barbarous nation of the Plain Indians. This road is called *passer par l'aile du Corbeau*, after a portage of that name.

The country all along the banks of the Red River, and a considerable distance from them on each side, is very little frequented, except by war parties, it being a warlike route between the Sautaux and their enemies the Sioux, who are ever at variance.

From the Forks of the Assiniboil and Red rivers, the plains ^{The Plains.} are quite near the banks, and so extensive that a man may travel from here to *Fort des Prairies*, Rocky Mountain, Missouri, Mississippi and many other places without passing a wood a mile long. All the wood here, as in the rest of the plains, being only small tufts, here and there, called by the French, *Flôts de bois*, surrounded by the plains the same as an island is encompassed by water, and slips that grow on the richest lands, on low points near the river and on its banks.

Half a day's march for the canoes higher than the Forks, is ^{Buffalo Ford.} the passage so called from being a good fording place and the first we meet of the "buffalo fords." Here we often meet the first buffalo, being generally some straggling bulls, and we can get here in three days from the entrance of the river into Lake Quinipique.

Besides the buffalo, we have another resource in the fish ^{Fish.} that abound in this little river; we take care to furnish the canoes with fishing tackling on that account. The sturgeon of this river is esteemed the best in the North-West, but they are only caught in small drawing nets of two fathoms long, and chiefly in the spring of the year. The fish we catch with the line are :

the *barbue* or cat-fish, *poisson doré*, pike, and *lacaiche*, a small species of white fish, well known in the St. Lawrence about Montreal, and so common here that I have seen them catch 30 or 40 per man while smoking their pipes.

Old trading
Posts.

All along the Assiniboil River may be seen the vestiges of many commercial settlements, several of which claim an ancient date. Blondishe's Fort is the first we come to. Next to it, *Fort la Reine*, according to some, but others say *Fort la Reine*, stood at the *Portage La Prairie*. After coming to Adhemar's Fort we got to the *Portage La Prairie* in a day,—that is the canoe—by land the distance does not exceed six miles.

Portage la
Prairie.

Portage la Prairie, so called by the Indians time out of mind, is about eight days march by water from the mouth of the river. Across this portage, which is about twelve miles over, the *Fort Dauphin* goods used to be carried under the French *commandants* to Lake Manitou-Ban and from thence to River *Dauphine*.

At this place, Mr. William McKay, on behalf of the North-West Company, passed the winter of 1794-1795 and had Mr. Réaume, Dejadon, for Laviolette and Mr. Linkwater for the Hon. H. B. Company to cope with, and against a superior quantity of merchandise he still made good returns.

Fort des
Trembles.

Three leagues above *Portage La-Prairie* stood *Le Fort des Trembles*, or Poplar Fort. In the year 1780 or 1781, the Indians made an attempt to pillage the traders, Messrs. Bruce and Boyer, and, in the scuffle that ensued, two Frenchmen and seven Indians were killed upon the spot. Owing to this affair, the traders were obliged, for fear of being cut off, to reembark their canoes and return to winter at the Forks. The small pox seizing the Natives and sweeping off three fourths of them, compelled them to lay aside their intention of cutting off all the white men in the interior country.

Above *Fort des Trembles* is a wood, called *La Grande Tremblière*, which stretches a considerable distance into the plains, so that

the common road is through the center of it. This wood is about three leagues long but may be avoided by striking out through the plains at *Portage La Prairie*. Above the *Grande Tremblière*, the soil changes suddenly; the lower parts, from the River *aux Morts* to the extremity of the *Grande Tremblière*, being generally a good soil, susceptible of culture and capable of bearing rich crops, whereas, above it, the soil has attained such a mixture of yellow sand, that it is, in some places, covered with grass which seldom exceeds ankle height and covering the ground but very sparingly. The soil.

The Pine Fort, the lowest post the North-West Company had in the Assiniboil River, we were obliged to abandon in the year 1794, as the Honorable Hudson Bay Company and other new comers had settled the year before at River *La Souris*, about seven leagues by land higher up the river, and three days travelling for the craft by water, the posts being too near, as we had placed ourselves alongside of the others at the above mentioned new station. Pine Fort.

It is sometimes commanded to the summer men to meet the canoes at any place above the *Grande Tremblière* with provision and on horseback, and, if such a step be necessary, an express is hurried off overland from any place above the Forks to give them warning. The Bourgeois go always up by land from the place they first meet the horses, and generally from the *Rivière du Milieu*, horses or not. The river *du Milieu* is ten leagues below Pine Fort.

The face of the country from the *Grande Tremblière* to the westernmost end of the *Montagne du Diable* is very poor and barren, and the soil mostly yellow sand, all broken into little hillocks, separated from one another by as many little glens, but at the *Montagne du Diable*, which commences at the Pine Fort and continues nearly two leagues to the westward, the The Country.

country becomes one great plain to the head of the Assiniboil River and even to Fort George and the Rocky Mountain.

The trade. The Indians who trade at the River *La Souris* are a mixture of all nations in the Assiniboil River, though the Krees are the most numerous. The others are : the roving *Sauteux*, who are some times here, some times at Fort Dauphin, some times at *Lac du Manitou-Ban* and other places, wherever fancy leads them, and Assiniboils, the same as at *Fort des Prairies*, but much more indolent than those who are to be met within the River *du Pas* (1).

From River *La Souris*, the trade with the Mandans and *Gros Ventres*, inhabiting both sides of the Missouri, has been carried on since Pine Fort was abandoned. This trade was carried on by the men taking upon credit a certain number of skins, as suited their circumstances, at the price of the post and paying at their return. Many of the Company's servants deserting from the Mandan country with an intention of going to the Illinois and other places on the Mississipi, the trade has since been entirely neglected.

The distance of the Mandan village, upon the Missouri, from our factory at River *La Souris* is ten or twelve days' march in winter, and supposed to be one hundred leagues due south of this place. In going to the Mandan country, the people are sometimes obliged to sleep without any wood, and, in such cases, experience has taught them to make fires of buffalo dung dried in the sun—after the Indian manner—of which there is always plenty to be had, which shows the vast numbers of those animals that frequent the plains. There is so little snow at the Missouri that the Natives run down the buffalos on horseback the whole winter through.

The Mandans.

These Indians live in settled villages, fortified with palisades, which they seldom ever abandon, and they are the best hus-

(1) North Saskatchewan.

bandmen in the whole North-West. They raise indian corn or maize, beans, pumpkins, squashes in considerable quantity, not only sufficient to supply their own wants, with the help of the buffalo, but also to sell and give away to all strangers that enter their villages. They are the mildest and most honest Indians upon the whole continent and, withal, very fond of the white people.

They report that the Missouri, from their settlements to the Rocky Mountain, is not obstructed with a single waterfall ; and French travellers from the Illinois and *Pincourt* affirm that it is one continued series of smooth current till its junction with the Mississipi, near the latter place. The Missouri Indians say its only fall is down the eastern side of the ridge of hills, called the Rocky Mountain, which they describe as very high, so much so, that they cross the river under the sheet of water without its coming near them. They suppose it takes its waters near the summit of the Rocky Mountain. The Mandan village, on the Missouri, by Mr. Evans Chart, is 460 leagues distant from the Illinois. The Miss-souri.

But, to return to the Assiniboil River ; it is very shallow and full of rapids for a day and a half's voyage for the canoes to the *Barrière*, about five leagues over land from the posts at River *la Souris*, but after that, they go on well till they come to the sand banks beyond Mountain *La Bosse*. The Assiniboine River.

Near a league above the *Barrière*, on each side of the river, begins a ridge of hills about the distance of a mile ; the summit of these ridges is only level with the rest of the plain country above, forming a deep vale between them, at the bottom of which runs the Assiniboil River, which keeps a continual winding course from one side to the other of the hills, called by the French, *Grandes Côtes*.

Those who go up by land, owing to the continual windings of the river, have plenty of time to hunt buffalo, moose deer,

caberie(?) and fowls of all kinds which abound in this country, and at the same time keep up with the canoes. The country is so plentiful that the canoes have always either fresh meat or fowls for their kettles.

The country here is, as below, one large plain, interspersed with small islands of wood here and there, but the low points of land near the water are frequently shaded with groves of venerable oaks and elms. The soil of the plains is a mixture of sand, clay, gravel and stones in many places, but the glen wherein the river runs is a mixture of clay and black mould.

The Mountain *à la Bosse*, the nearest post to the North-West Company's settlement at River *La Souris*, and distant from it six days voyage for the canoes and two days for the foot men through the plains, has been frequently established and as often abandoned, owing to the oppositions that come into that quarter, as these gentlemen, when by themselves, establish as few posts as they conveniently can, in order to save property. On the contrary, when incommoded by new comers, they subdivide and divert the trade into as many little channels as they have men and clerks to occupy, well knowing that their opponents, who have but few goods generally, cannot oppose them at every place.

This post turned out about sixty packs, at an average, for the North-West Company, exclusive of opposition trade, but the returns from it are mostly wolves and buffalo robes.

Espé- Six days' march from *Montagne à la Bosse*, the River *qui appelle* (1) enters the Assiniboil River, and on it, about two short days' march in canoes further up, is *Fort Espérance* which has been settled these ten years past and was chiefly Mr. Robert Grant's residence while he superintended the Red River affair and has

(1) In olden times, the shores of this river were haunted by a spirit, whose voice, resembling that of a human being, was often heard wailing during the night. So said the Natives, and the *Voyageurs* called it *Rivière qui Appelle*.

always been inhabited, summer and winter, ever since. It is at this post and *Montagne à la Bosse* that most of the Red River provisions have been procured, being, both, Assiniboil posts; provisions are their chief returns.

River *la Coquille* is the nearest post to the River *qui appelle* and distant from it about a day's march overland, tho' in the fall it takes the canoes four days by water; a trifling post as most of the Indians about it go to the River *Tremblante* and River *qui appelle*; those that trade chiefly at this post are *Saulteux*.

River *Tremblante* is next to River *La Coquille* and distant from it a little further than it is from *Rivière qui appelle*. This, and ^{*Rivière Tremblante, Fort.*} the temporary posts established above it, furnish most of the beaver and otter in the Red River returns, but this trade has been almost ruined since the Hudson Bay Company entered the Assiniboil River by the way of Swan River, carrying their merchandise from one river to the other on horseback,—three days' journey,—who by that means and the short distance between Swan River and their factory at York Fort, from whence they are equipped, can arrive at the *Coude de l'homme*, in the Assiniboil River, a month sooner than we can return from the Grand Portage, secure the fall trade, give credits to the Indians and send them to hunt before our arrival; so that we see but very few in that quarter upon our arrival. River *Tremblante* has been Mr. Cuthbert Grant's favorite residence since he came to Red River.

Amongst the *Sauteux* in the Assiniboil River the same customs ^{The} and superstitions prevail as in their native places, Lake *La Pluie* ^{*Sauteux.*} and *Lac Rouge*. When a relation or a friend dies, to testify their ^{Funeral.} sorrow, they pierce their arms and thighs in divers places with arrows, and in their mournings daub their faces over with a mixture of earth and coal, and frequently cut off their hair.

A corpse is seldom taken out at the door of their lodge, but the place opposite to the deceased's head is raised up in order to

make a passage for it. The body is gathered up with its knees in the belly to make it as short as possible, and every thing, he used about his person, is interred with him, viz: his arms, accoutrements, provisions for his journey, tobacco to smoke, a dish and a wooden spoon, shoes and his best clothing upon his back. Their favorite manner of disposing of their dead is upon scaffolds raised a man's height above the ground, tho' they sometimes inter them in the ground.

Medecines. After the funeral succeeds the funeral feast, which is eaten sitting around the grave or scaffold, of which he is supposed to partake as well as of the Calumet, of which the stem end is pointed towards him that he may smoke. A lock of his hair, cut off before the interment, is carefully wrapped up and carried about with them for the space of twelve months, wrapped in a piece of the best cloth to be had and garnished with porcupine quills &c., &c., after their fancy.

Almost every great man or chief among the Indians is a juggler or doctor of physic,—their medecines being simples they collect themselves—and when one teaches to another the virtue of an herb he knew not, there is scarce any bound to his liberality in repaying his instructor; but since traders frequent these posts several Indians make use of European medecines.

The "jonglerie". Every juggler pretends to have a familiar spirit who pays him frequent visits when his attendance is required and, in emergencies, directs by his answers, which are generally as dark and ambiguous as those of the ancient oracles among the heathen, and which may be interpreted in many different ways. This spirit never appears but in the *jonglerie*, a small circular apartment raised a man's height, inclosed with raw hides and bound with thongs. Into this place the juggler is trust, sometimes tied neck and heels, and a few minutes after, the Tabou and Chichiquoi begin beating and he kicks the cords that bound him out of the

juggling place, though no person is seen within. The *jonglerie* is about three feet in diameter.

All the answers he gets from his familiar are during his stay in the juggling house. Most Indians put an implicit belief on what the person in the *jonglerie* says, for he speaks in two different voices to deceive his hearers.

The Crees were formerly a great and numerous nation. Their The Crees. language is spoken still by their descendants, which is a dialect of the Chippeway or Saulteux. They extended formerly from Lake Quinipique—by some called Cristineau or Killistnoe Lake—as far north as Athabasca and a considerable way into the plains, by the River du Pas, Assiniboil River and Swan River, covering several hundred leagues territory. But, owing to their wars with their neighbours, the small pox of 1780-81 and other misfortunes, the third of the nation does not now remain.

Silver works and wampum are of no value in trading with them, and they never wear any of these articles as ornaments. They dress generally after the Assiniboil manner, all in leather shirts and leggings, a buffalo robe or a blanket, by way of covering, over the whole.

When an Indian swears, he takes the Master of Life to witness, The Master of Life. likewise the Earth, the Fire and the Water. They seldom pray to the Master of Life but when they are in imminent danger of perishing. At all other times, their petitions are to Gog and Magog, or the evil spirit, whom they much dread, for they have such a sublime idea of the Bounty of the Master of Life that they think it incompatible with him to afflict them. But the evil spirit, they say, is always meditating mischief to them and therefore they sacrifice to him to appease his anger and to divert him from his evil purposes.

Their only bloody sacrifice is to hang a dog; all the other sacrifices they use consist of European merchandises, country

produce, such as their own hunt, &c., which they chiefly deposit upon scaffolds raised a certain height above the earth, so as to be out of the reach of wild beasts.

Marriages. The Indians of the Red or Assiniboil rivers, in general, have no ceremonies in their marriages, or union of sexes. A young man who has taken a wife for the first time is under great difficulties; out of modesty, bashfulness or custom, he appears but seldom in his father-in-law's tent or lodge in the day time. They always come to sleep with the bride after night fall and retire at day break.

They hunt the whole day to the emolument of their father-in-law, and in this servile condition they are obliged to remain the space of a year, and sometimes longer if the bride does not bring forth a son or a daughter to deliver the young Indian from slavery. After that has taken place, he is at liberty to choose a home for himself, though he still remains in a manner tributary to his father-in-law, and generally makes him some present, according to his abilities, as often as they meet or see each other.

Thus, daughters are as much esteemed as sons by the Indians, and, indeed, they bring them much greater emoluments, for a young man, as soon as he becomes husband, forsakes his father's tent to which he seldom returns as an inmate,—for women, in general, have a great ascendancy over their husbands and they always prefer living amongst those with whom they have been accustomed from their childhood,—tho' sons are much esteemed by them to make hunters and warriors, the two great objects of all Indians.

The Assiniboils are numerous in the Red River, and are divided into many tribes or families such as, *Les gens des canots*, or the Canoe tribe; *Les gens des filles*, the Girls tribe; *Les gens du bois fort*, or the Wood tribe, &c., &c., all speaking the same language with the Sioux or Naudawessi, and originally a tribe

of that numerous nation. Their dress consists of a buffalo Dress. dressed skin, which they wear as the *Saulteux* or *Augebois* do the blanket. Under this robe they wear a leather shirt, sometimes with the hair on, but dressed in the same manner as their robes. Their leggings are also made of dressed leather, those for the young folks are made of wolf, caberie and other skins of a fine quality, which they dress as white and pliable as *chamois*. Their shoes, as well as those of the Crees, are always made of buffalo leather the hair turned inwards which serves them as socks. Their caps are of fox and fishers' skins, with the head and tail of the beast tied so that the head of the wearer is encompassed by it; the tail hangs down between the shoulders, leaving the top or crown of the head without any covering.

As for their hair, they allow it to grow till it reaches their knees, that is, on one side of the head, and they take as much pains to keep it short on the other side. Lest this lock, which hangs down on one side over their shoulder, should happen to meet any violence when they intend to become intoxicated, they coil it like a cable on the top of their head, which gives them an uncouth aspect. This ridiculous custom is not peculiar to the Assiniboils, the Crees follow it also.

These people generally winter together in large camps and, Buffalo make what the French call, *parcs*, an enclosure of wood in parcs. form of a fence and circular into which they drive whole herds of buffalos. This seems to be an ancient custom amongst all Indians inhabiting the plains, being a method that all travellers through these parts speak of, and which they want neither powder nor ball to execute.

The night previous to their sending for the buffalos, two or more young men make themselves ready—by a harangue the chief makes, for Indians know no command—to go and fetch the buffalos. Two, and sometimes even one, is sufficient to bring them to the ranks where tufts of bushes and other obstacles

are stuck up in the snow or ground to hide a person behind it from the buffaloes, and thus every man, women and child in the camp have their stations.

A good runner frequently goes before the band with the hair of his robe outwards and half bent, so as to represent a buffalo and, by that means, decoys them into the park which has a small door to make him a passage out.

After the band is entered, the women stand upon the door which has an easy ascent upon the outside, but is quite steep within, and the paramount of the camp lights a pipe and offers the end to the buffaloes or to some old bull among them whom he takes for the father or chief of the band and, after thanking the Master of Life for sending food to themselves and to their children, he harangues him something to this effect: "My Grandfather, we are glad to see you, and happy to find that you are not come in a shameful manner, for you have brought plenty of your young men with you. Be not angry at us; we are obliged to destroy you to make ourselves live".

After the harangue is over, they smoke their pipes, sitting around the *Parc*, and then shoot all the herd down with their arrows; fire arms are prohibited upon this occasion. The slaughter being finished, the Chief of the Park distributes a little swansdown, coloured in vermillon, upon each buffalo's head, and leaves every person at liberty to take what he thinks proper. But, so superstitious are these people, that the chief of the park thinks that if he were to eat any of this meat thus killed, it would be out of his power to make buffaloes enter his park ever after; so he must have meat killed in the open field for his own use.

Mourning. They testify their sorrow for their deceased much in the same manner as the Crees and *Saulteux* do, by piercing their thighs and arms with arrows, cutting their hair and covering their

heads with patches of earth; their women cut their hair and scarify their legs.

The men, as well as those of the Crees, have no dancing, but Dances. the women of both nations dance by moving, all at the same time, from right to left and then back again, without giving themselves any other motion than shifting their toes and heels alternately and without breaking their order in the least, having all their faces the same way, and being drawn up in one or two lines, according to their number or as the ground permits.

The Assiniboils of the Red River are, in general, a lazy, indolent Character. and perfidious set, and, I believe, the worst hunters of any Indians in the North-West who have traders amongst them. Their whole hunt consists of wolves, foxes, kitts and buffalo robes; for beavers, otters and other good furs, they seldom take any. They are likewise great thieves and will steal from a rusty iron nail to a horse. Stealing horses is quite a necessary trade among them, and they steal them from their own traders as well as from the Indians of the Missouri and of *Fort des Prairies*.

Most of the Red River Indians go to war during the absence War. of the canoes at the Grand Portage upon the Rocky Mountain and Snake Indians or any of the nations at a distance from their own country. In these excursions they take forty days or two months, sometimes travelling night and day, especially on their return, if they have been successful, for fear of a pursuit; and they mostly return by different routes, leaving the wounded to shift for themselves.

EXTRACTS

FROM

MR JOHN M^CDONNELL'S JOURNAL ⁽¹⁾

(1793-1795.)

1793.

Arrived at the fort of the River *qui appelle*, called by Mr. OCTOBER Robert Grant, when he built it, *Fort Espérance*.—About sixty 11th, Fri. lodges of Indians at the fort, chiefly Crees.

I went with Mr. C. Grant to the Forks to separate the men, 12th, Sat : canoes and goods intended for the Upper Fort, or River *Tremblante*, from those that are to come here.

(1) The clerks of the North-West Company—especially those in charge of posts and trading expeditions—were required to keep a journal or diary, in which they took notes daily of all occurrences which might be of importance to the Company and to their trade. They were so particular on that score that, when their always very small stock of paper became exhausted, they had recourse to birch bark, upon which they would scribble, as well as they could, and with whatever substitute for ink they could find, the notes required of them, and sew the leaves up in book form for their *Bourgeois*.

These journals are, of necessity, uninteresting reading, as a rule; but they may, in many instances, have their importance in recalling old names of men and places which the rapid strides of civilisation will probably soon have consigned to oblivion.

Having been written without any thought of publicity and with no desire to create effect, they must, so far as they go, give a better and safer idea of what the Natives of the North-West really were at the time they were written than most writings of higher pretensions.

The extracts here published, from Mr. McDonnell's journal of 1793-1795, give a fair idea of what most of these journals and diaries were.

- 13th, Sun : Returned from the Forks after performing the duty we went upon.—Traded with the Assinibouans a quantity of provisions ; many of them went away not chusing to stay and drink with the Crees.
-
- 15th, Tues : Gave the Crees some credits.—They were drunk and troublesome all night.
- 16th, Wed : Some of the Squesipi-bouatac, *gens des filles* arrived, made their presents and got drunk.
-
- 18th, Fri : Neil McKay set out to build and winter at the forks of this river, alongside of Mr. Peter Grant, who has made his pitch about five leagues from here. Mr. N. McKay's effects are carried in two boats, navigated by five men, each. Mr. C. Grant set out also for his quarters of River *Tremblante*, about thirty leagues from here. The dogs made a woeful howling at all the departures.
- 19th, Sat : Peltier and Sansregret came from the Pine Fort with letters from John Miln, left in charge there, which I immediately sent after Mr. C Grant by Jos. Tranquille. Seventeen warriors came from the banks of the Missouri for tobacco. They slept ten nights on their way, and are emissaries from a party of Assinibouans who went to war upon the Scioux.
- 20th, Sun : The warriors traded a few skins brought upon their backs, and went off ill-pleased with their reception. After dark, the dogs kept a constant barking, which induced a belief that some of the warriors were lurking about the fort for an opportunity to steal. I took a sword and a pistol and went to sleep in the store. Nothing took place.
-
- 22nd, Tues : Paul Tranquille came from the Forks for a supply of goods for Neil McKay, which I sent him.—Dug up and entered our potatoes, say : ten bushels.

.....
 There fell six inches of snow last night.—Drew up the canoes ^{21th, Thur :} to pass the winter.—The river frozen over.—A single lodge of Assinibouans came in to trade.

.....
 Two of Mr. N. McKay's men came from the ^{31st, Thur :} Forks, supposing this to be All Saints' Day.—Raised a flag staff, poplar, 50 feet above ground.

.....
 Five men, five loaded horses and five dog trains started with ^{NOVEMBER,} goods for Mr. Grant's, River *Tremblante*. Peltier, old Robert ^{6th, Wed :} Taylor, (freeman from the Missouri), Toussaint Charbonneau, Gervais and Belair started for Pine Fort. Mr. Grant is so ill off for writers, that he hired this Robert Taylor for \$60 for the winter to write for Augé, whom he left at River *la Souris* alongside with Mr. Ronald Cameron, and where we have since learned Mr. D. McKay, with his Hudson's Bay boats and canoes, is also.

.....
 The men were in chace of a white Buffalo all day but could ^{23rd, Sat :} not get within shot of him. Faignant killed two cows.—a mild day.

The men commenced a fresh chase of the white buffalo, but ^{24th, Sun :} with as little success as the preceeding day.....

.....
 St. Andrews day. Hoisted the flag in honor of the Titulary ^{30th, Sat :} Saint of Scotland.—A beautiful day.—Expected Messrs Peter Grant and Neil McKay to dinner,—they sent an excuse by Bonneau.

.....
—Sent Mr. Peter Grant a Town and Country ^{DECEMBER.} Magazine of 90 (1790). Poitra's wife made me nine pairs of ^{2nd, Mon :} shoes.

3rd, Tues : Poitras killed a cow at the *Prairie à la Paille*, half a mile from the fort, which La Grave drew home.

.....

10th, Tues : The nine men equipt (on their own account) for the Missouri started, viz : Raphaël Faignan, Antoine Bourrier dit Lavigne, Joseph Dubé, J. B. Lafrance, Joseph Tranquille, J. B. Bertrand, Chrysostôme Joncquard, Louis Houle et François La Grave ; the *Machinaway* (1) *du Chien Fou* and associate came in ; two lodges. The former made a present of 30 Ps of dried meat and 10 skins for which he got 9 gals, to take away with him (2). He made a small present of 5 ps dried meat and 10 fresh tongues, to drink here, for which he got 8 *fiotes*. Gave the hunter 6 *fiotes* to drink with them.

.....

28th, Sat : An Assinibouan came from the 2nd lake of this river, who says the warriors are returned, having killed one man and eight women and taken two female captives.

.....

1794.

JANUARY Mr. Grant gave the men two gallons rum and three fathoms
1st, Wed : of tobacco, by way of New Year's gift.

.....

4th, Satur : Mr. C. Grant started on his return home to the Upper Fort. As I was firing, with my own musket, in compliment to my *Bourgeois'* departure, a handful of powder I held blew up accidentally and burnt my hand and face a good deal,.....

.....

10th, Fri : The *Frère du chien fou* went off,—An Assinibouan woman was delivered of her child in the house, and had no other screen

(1) Aide-de-camp, companion, attendant, sometimes brother.

(2) These presents were independant of the regular trade, and always acknowledged with liquor or tobacco.

than her husband's buffalo robe to keep her from view along the cheek or *jambage* of the chimney, while in labor, which did not last above a quarter of an hour. She was trading out in the cold air and doing the other painful drudgeries of her station an hour after, with her first tender infant on her back, same as if nothing had happened.

.....
Le Père du Grimaceu sent two young men to the fort to let us ^{14th, Tues :} know that his son was dead, and to get a drop, to cheer his spirits on this mournful occasion,—sent him a gal. rum—.....
 I cut 20 sacks or *taureaux* to put pemican in and gave them to Minie to sew (1)

.....
 The fifteen men sent to Pine Fort returned with 4 rolls ^{18th, Thur :} Brazil tobacco, 1 roll Spencer's twist, 1 keg powder, 3 sacks balls, 2 bales goods, 3 kegs highwines, 8lbs vermillion, 6 bunches blue beads, 3 laced capots, 4 capots of 4 ells, 2 ditto $3\frac{1}{2}$, 1 ditto 3 ells ; 5 blankets $2\frac{1}{2}$ pts.—Gave Minie 40 more *taureaux* to sew, after I had cut them.

.....
Le Père du Grimaceu sent for tobacco in the morning and ^{28th, Tues :} arrived about noon, *en traite*. He adopted me in lieu of the son he lately lost. It is now cold weather, certainly, but this man came to the fort without anything upon his body but a single pair of shoes upon his feet ; the rest of his body was as bare naked as when he was born, and he shivered like a leaf with cold ; he had come about two miles in this state, thro' an open plain.....

.....
 Sent young Azure to guide Jollifou to Mr. Grant's, as I ^{30th, Thur :} could not take on myself to give goods to another department

(1) Buffalo raw hides, cut and made up in bags, containing about eighty pounds of pemican.

without his knowledge, this being a case not provided for in my instructions.

FEBRUARY *Vieux Frêne, Camarade de Paulette*.—Poitras' father—and five
12th, Wed: young men came *sans dessein* (1) from the Forks; *La Merde*
d'Eturgeon and two more Assinibouans came *en traite* and made
a present of 14 ps. dried meat, 6 bladders grease, 5 ps. pounded
meat, 12 fresh tongues and 4½ skins; gave him ½ a keg rum;
gave the chiefs at the fort, each a *firole*, in all, 7 *firoles*.

.....
27th, Thu: Paid Mary Lafontaine for lacing 14 pairs of snowshoes, and
ten buffalo skins she dressed and cut into cords for the packs,
and for cutting ten more skins into thongs that were dressed to
her hand, 15 plues.

.....
MARCH *Le Grand Diable, le Pensionnaire, Petit Plue*, &c.,
3rd, Mon: came to the fort and made a present: the first, of 21 skins and
a buffalo robe; *le Pensionnaire*, one of 8 buffalo robes. Gave
the former 7 gals. and the latter half a keg. *Tranquille* bought
a slave woman—i. e., taken in war—from the latter for two
horses and 20 pluëz in goods. Gave the hunter six *firoles* to drink
with them.

.....
24th, Mon: Many Indians came for tobacco who say they are coming to
trade *en loge*, say: 43 tents, chiefly Watombagh-ë-na-ton, *Gens du*
Grand Diable.

.....
.....
MAY. Sent off the canoes early in the morning, Mr. Grant and I set
1st, Thurs: out about noon.—Slept at the Forks *Rivière qui appelle*.

(1) This expression is still in use among the French Half Breeds of the North-West and signifies, "without any cause," "for nothing."

Left the Forks at 2 P. M. —Slept at Tabault's campment; next 2nd, Fri.: day, rain forced us ashore a few points below the Little River.

Killed five cows and two buffalo calves and camped below the 4th, Sun: fort of Mountain *à la Bosse* about two leagues.—Next day, overtook and passed old Houle at the long point of the campment de *l'Etredoux* (1).—Camped below the *Loge de Paille*.

Passed the Rapid River. This day we passed about 400 buf- 6th, Tues: faloes drowned in the river. They lay on almost every point, huddled together.—Arrived at Augé's River *la Souris* Fort; sun, an hour high. Augé has sad complaints against his H. B. opponent, Mr. Donald, alias Mad. McKay.....

By order of Mr. Grant, I took down three or four or five de- 8th, Thur: clarations of his own men against Mr. Donald McKay, in consequence of which we took him prisoner for firing at Augé and laying in ambush for his life. I was his guard and slept with him at night.

Mr. Grant allowed M. McKay, *le matin*, to go home, seal his 9th, Fri: journal and write to his chief, Mr. McNabb. I went with him and, according to his promise, he came back quietly with me.—The canoes and boats arrived.—Finished marking Augé's packs, 43.

Left River *La Souris* after breakfast with 14 canoes and 3 10th, Sa: boats. Mr. Grant thought proper to release Mr. Donald McKay—so we did not embark him—and he was so pleased with recovering his liberty that it was at his house we breakfasted, by his particular request.

.....
Finished making the Pine Fort packs.—Arranged the men in 13th, Tue: the canoes and boats just in the same order they arrived here last fall. The Indians in the lodges around the fort had a dreadful false alarm from the Scioux, which made them all

(1) Probably "l'Entredoux".

rush to the fort gate in great confusion to be admitted into it, quite armed.

.....
16th, Fri: Left the Pine Fort after breakfast. Poor old Jos. Duchêsne, alias *Pirouguelon*, cried for sorrow at parting with Mr. Grant....

17th, Sat: Passed River *du Milieu*, *Fort des Trembles* and *Portage la Prairie*, a little below which we passed the Hudson's Bay ashore.—Camped at Adhemar's Fort.—Saw a great many sturgeons, but caught none, tho' we tried repeatedly.

18th, Sun: We were up and under arms, sitting at the feet of trees all last night,—i. e., each man his tree—around the campement, but it proved to be a false alarm. Slept a little above the old *Fort de la Reine*.

19th, Mon: Met two canotées of South-Men ascending, headed by a Mons. Fournier.—Took Morelle, a deserter of ours from Pembina River, from him. The first prairie below *Fort de la Reine* has been called the *Prairie à Fournier* after this South Trader, ever since.

These canoes are the property of Beaubien and Laviolette. Fournier took some breakfast with us. While ashore, a storm accompanied by rain, thunder and lightning overtook us.—Camped near Blondishe's Fort.

20th, Tue: Arrived at the Forks Red River about noon, where we found Frederick Schutz and Desmarais from the Pimbina River. They informed us that Fournier had letters for Mr. Grant from Le Sieur and Frederick himself, which he denied, tho' Mr. Grant enquired of him.—Slept at the Forks.

.....
23rd, Fri: Started from the Forks with 19 canoes and two boats manned by near 100 men and masters:—slept a few points below Mr. Frobisher's Fort.

24th, Sat: Arrived at the Lake at 10 A. M., but were stopped there the rest of the day by a head wind:—cold, Misty rain.

.....
 Left the entrance of the Red River and embarked on Lake 26th, Mon :
 Winipik at 10 A. M., the wind having abated.—Camped at the
 Grand Marais, six leagues on our way from the entrance of the
 Red River.

Left the Grand Marais at noon, Mr. Grant's canoe turned into 27th, Tues :
 the Bay of the Indian Portage, but I went straight for the usual
 one of *Ile à la Biche*, and arrived at the Sieur's Fort ; (1) with a
 fair wind, an hour before sunset ; neither Mr. Grant, nor the
 canoes came.

A stormy day ;—I am much concerned for Mr. Grant and the 28th, Wed :
 canoes behind, for the wind fell and rose by intervals ; it was
 calm apparently for two hours and, then, frightful gusts of
 wind came on a sudden.

.....
 My *Bourgeois* arrived in the morning, and the two boats soon 29th, Thu :
 after.

.....
 Piché was obliged to push his boat on account of *Pied de JUNE*
Loutre—whom he had filled drunk—proving too troublesome. 1st, Sun :
 Most of our canoes started also,—Took on account of what we
 have here.

Mr. Grant set out for the Grand Portage in a half light canoe, 2nd, Mon :
 and I am to go out in charge of the Brigade.

N. B.—This being a route you are as well acquainted with as
 myself, I shall not trouble you with my voyaging diary till I
 get back to the River *qui appelle* Fort, this autumn.

1794.

Left our campment at the *Bassin* early in the morning.—Great SEPT.
 numbers of buffaloes all along the route.—Breakfasted at the 28th. Sun :

(1) Fort Alexander, at the mouth of the River Winnipeg.

River *aux Castors*, three leagues further, and arrived at the Fort of the River *qui appelle* about 4 P. M.—Killed two bulls on the way.—The distance we came to-day is 7 leagues, that is, 4 from where we breakfasted, to the fort.

.....
 OBER Mr. Grant started early for the River *La Coquille*, where Mr.
 , Friday Peter Grants people have built a fort this summer. This place
 is half way between here and Mr. Grants' residence of last year,
 about 14 to 15 leagues over land. Paul Tranquille came at dusk
 from Mountain *à la Bosse*, where we left John Miln, old Houle
 &c. to build ; Messrs. Wm. McKay and Peter Grant had arrived
 there before he left it.....

.....
 , Mon :Pulled the potatoes ; only 9 bushels.—Great herds
 of buffaloes within two or three miles of the post, say : in the
 plain just above the *Grande Côte* on the Assinibouan road.

.....
 , Tues : Sent Louis Houle and Pierre Etienne Ducharme to remain at
 the *Passage de la Corne de Cerf* to get Poitras' equipment and
 news from Mr. Wm. McKay when he passes.

.....
 h, Mon : Calculated the pickets wanted for circumventing the fort, say :
 1,000, about 60 to a man.

.....
 5
 QUARY St. James, St. Pierre, Bédard, Lacouture, Pierre Alain and
 , Mon : Gareau arrived from *Rivière La Souris* with pieces. The latter
 staid behind at the *Foutreau's* lodge. He gave them a keg of
 one gallon rum he had of his own, and that not sufficing to get
 the *Foutreau's* daughter, as he expected, he pierced the keg of
 high-wines he had in charge and gave it to the Indians, pure ;
 in short, there are six quarts missing off the keg and six large
 knives wanting in his load.

The whole keg would have been taken from him by the *Foutreau* and his band, who got enraged with drinking pure highwines, had it not been for the *Gendre du Foutreau*, a good Indian, who hurried Gareau and Alain,—the *Joueur de Gobelets*—off in the night, *en fuyards*, leaving the girl, as well as the rum and knives in the quiet possession of the Indians.—Vast numbers of buffaloes quite near the fort; the men kill some every day.

.....
 St. Denis and St. Pierre returned from Mountain à la Bosse with the afflicting news of poor John Miln's death which happened last Sunday, 8th instant.—His sickness and death happened suddenly and show how necessary it is to be prepared for that awful change that cannot be reacted over again.

.....
Grand Diable arrived and made me a present of 6 buffalo robes and 10 wolves,—gave him, in return, a large keg and a chief's clothing in consideration of his bringing and sending his band to trade here all winter, and in recompense for his giving the Fort a good name and sending every person who would listen to him to trade. *Ot-chigh-tché*, Tabault's daughter and other Indians who came with him, made a present of 4 buffalo robes for which I gave them two gallons.....

.....
Le Grand Diable went away after making me a tender of his wife's favors and seemed surprised and chagrined at my refusal, but the Lady much more so, and I thought it prudent to make her some trifling presents to pacify her.

.....
 Snowed incessantly all day again;—about two feet fresh snow on the ground.....

28th, Tues: Gummed our canoes and launched them.—Started them for the Forks with 138+137 taureaux of pemican.—*Le Frère, les deux Cœurs* came to sell a young slave girl, which, on my refusal, Poitras purchased.

.....

.....

MAY The Brigade and I left the Forks of the River *qui appelle*
 18th, Mon: about sunrise, say: 9 canoes and 3 boats, well loaded. My canoe having an extra man, I took the lead, intending to have spare time to hunt and prepare for the arrival of the other crafts at Mountain *à la Bosse*.

Observing a good many carcasses of buffaloes in the river and along its banks, I was taken up the whole day with counting them and, to my surprise, found I had numbered when we put up at night, 7360, drowned and mired along the river and in it. It is true, in one or two places, I went on shore and walked from one carcass to the other, where they lay from three to five files deep.

Camped at the first little plain with a steep high bank below the Grand Bois, where we made a good kettle of beaver, goose and duck.—Gave men a *coup* and slept soundly.—The brigade behind.....

21st, Thur:Overtook Messrs. Grant and Geo. McKay's canoe ashore,—breakfasting amongst the fine oak grove above the Rapid River where they had slept, shifted and shaved.—Started with them after breakfast and kept in company with them till we arrived at Fort of River *La Souris*.....

There were five different oppositions built here last winter, all working against one another.

Jussome and the Mandan men arrived here with their returns, fifteen days ago, all but Jos. Dubé, who deserted from the rest and staid with the Indians of the Missouri.

.....

Overtook all our crafts at the River *aux morts*..... Entered JUNE
Lake Ouinipique and crossed over to the *Grand Marais* where 4th, Thurs:
we were stopped by the wind the rest of this day and whole of
next.—Set fire to the reeds which made a blazing fire.....

Left *Grand Marais* tho' it still blew and reached *Ile à la Biche*, 6th, Satur:
where we waited our boats, then proceeded to *Pointe au Sable*.—
Next morning, early, arrived at *Bas de la Rivière* House where
we found Messrs. McLellan and Latour, arrived from their
winter quarters.

MR FRANÇOIS-ANTOINE LAROCQUE

THE

MISSOURI JOURNAL

1804-1805

THE
MISSOURI JOURNAL
BY
F. A. LAROCQUE ⁽¹⁾
CLERK OF THE NORTH-WEST CO.

1804-1805

Set off from Fort Assiniboine, at 2 P. M., for the Missouri with ^{1804.}
a trading equipment. We had nine horses, five of which were ^{11th, Nov:}
loaded with the Company's property. Our company consisted of
Charles McKenzie, Bte. Lafrance, Wm. Morrison, Joseph
Azure, Bte. Turenne, Alexis McKay and myself. Encamped
about three miles from the Fort, near a small pond of stagnated

(1) Mr. François-Antoine Larocque was a brother of Mr. Joseph Larocque, who occupied for many years a very prominent position in the North-West and Hudson Bay Companies. See : Tassé, *Les Canadiens de l'Ouest*.

Mr. F. A. Larocque was a man of good abilities, of great courage and energy. He was well read, studious and equally proficient in the use of the French and English languages, but he decidedly preferred the latter.

The life of an Indian trader had not for him the attractions it had for his brother ; he soon left the North-West, came to Montreal and entered business, in which he was most unfortunate. He passed the last years of his life in close retirement and arduous study, and died, much advanced in years, in the Grey nunnery of St. Hyacinthe.

Mr. Larocque married a Miss Côté, the daughter of an independent North-West trader, and the sister of Mr. Jules Maurice Quesnel. He left only one son, Mr. Alfred Larocque, the father of Mr. le Chevalier Larocque, ex-papal zouave ; of Mr. Armand Larocque and of Mrs. Aldéric Ouimet, the wife of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

water in order to wait for Morrison who had remained behind with one horse and load. He arrived an hour after: sent McKay to the Fort to fetch provisions for himself, which he had forgotten. Messrs. Chaboillez and Henry came to see me; they remained with us a few hours, bid us farewell and departed.

.....

Our course since leaving the fort has been west of south. Set off in a south south-west direction, but the plains being burnt, we changed our course north-west by west in order to find food for our horses, having been informed that the plains were not burnt in that direction.—Encamped at sunset at the last woods upon the second river of the Elk Head, having crossed the first river nearly at its source in the plains.—Mr. McKenzie broke his gun.

Removed our situation to about seven miles higher up the river, there being better food for the horses, and from whence the *traverse* of the plains is shorter to River *La Souris*, as it was impossible to get by day to that river from where we slept last night, as there is not a stick of wood in the intermediate space.

Set off early in the morning and did not stop at all in the course of the day. Perceived the woods upon the *Souris* at sunset and arrived at them before dark, after having crossed a creek in the plains, called by the Indians "Deep River," from its being very deep in some places, where the water gathers and forms into lakes..... The plains were burnt in many places.

.....

Set off one hour and a half before day light,—walked hard till noon, when we arrived at the woods,—stopped one hour to refresh ourselves and horses,—resumed our course, still following the river and encamped upon it at sunset.

.....

..... The plains being on fire to the south-west, and the 19th. wind blowing from that quarter, brought such volumes of smoke as prevented us from seeing one hundred yards before us, so that we were forced to stop at a creek which lay in our way and which disembogues in the *Souris*, and there pass the night.

Went down the Creek and came to the river which we fol- 20th. lowed for an hour and a half; we again ascended the hills. The wind having shifted south, the weather was clear for about two hours, when it again veered to the south-west and we were involved in smoke, but not so thick as yesterday.

At 10 A.M., we stopped on a hill to look at a dark spot with the help of a spy glass; it appeared moving and we found it to be buffaloes. As we were moving off, we heard a number of people whooping and hollowing as Indians generally do when at war. Hills prevented us from seeing whom they proceeded from; we immediately unsheated our guns for defence, as we were certain that, if they were numerous enough, they would endeavour to pillage us of our goods, it being their fixed determination to prevent, as much as they can, any communication between their traders and the Missouri Indians, as they wish to engross that trade themselves. False alarm.

However, they soon appeared to the number of eight, and behaved very peaceably; they asked for a little tobacco, we gave them four inches to each and twenty rounds of ammunition among them all. As we were going off, one of them went before the horses and endeavoured to prevent them from passing, being, I suppose, displeased at not receiving more. He let his robe fall and put an arrow in his bow, as if to let fly at the horse; however, we soon got him to give way and went on. One of them followed us for about one mile, and, being questioned, said he wanted more tobacco. I refused giving him any, being very sorry they had got any at all.

They informed us that they were coming from the Missouri villages, where a great number of their nation, that is Assiniboines, had been and were on their way back, whom they said we would probably meet with them and likewise with a band of Knisteneaux who had also been there trading corn and horses.

Continued our journey and encamped at sunset on the side of a creek. The plains all burnt, excepting the spot on which we encamped. When it was dark, we tied our horses with long cords to pickets fixed in the ground, in order that they might not get away from us during the night; kept watch over them all night by turns, being apprehensive that some of these vagabonds had followed us to steel them.

.....
Prepared to set off, but two horses belonging to Lafrance and Azure are missing. Remained here the whole day to search for them but to no effect.—Killed a bull. At sunset removed a little higher upon the *coulée* to a better place for the feeding of our horses, where we kept them tied to pickets all night.

Set off at break of day, taking the loads of the missing horses on Mr. McKenzie's horse and my own.—Found the Assiniboine road leading to the Missouri at 9 o'clock A. M.;—at mid-day passed one of their encampments, counted seventy-five fire-places;—passed two more encampments in the evening and stopped for the night by the side of a small lake around which, and no where else, there was grass for our horses.....

Set off at sunrise; two hours after, met with two of the Big Belly Indians who were going hunting; they appeared well pleased to see us; I smoked a pipe with them and departed. At mid-day, saw the smoke of one of the Big Belly villages to the south of which we passed; at two, arrived at another of their villages where I enquired for Charbonneau, (it being his usual place of residence,) and was informed by a Hudson's Bay man, who is there for the purposes of trade, that he was with some

Americans, below the Mandan village, to whom he is engaged. Being unwilling to leave the Hudson's Bay man here alone to get the whole trade of this village, I got the horses unloaded and made a small equipment of goods which I gave in charge to Mr. McKenzie.

Left Morrison with Mr. McKenzie in the best lodge we could find, and proceeded to the Mandan villages with the remainder of the goods—excepting an equipment destined for the upper village of the Big Bellies—On the road thither, met with Captain Lewis, chief of the American party—with Jussiaume and Charbonneau—; had about a quarter of an hour's conversation with him, during which he invited me to his house and appeared very friendly. 25th. He meets with Captain Lewis.

Arrived at the Mandan village at 3 P. M., entered the lodge of the Black Cat, the chief of the village, sent for the "Grand," the chief of the other Mandan village, gave them both a chief's clothing and explained to them the motive of my coming &c.—gave a pipe of tobacco to all the grown men as usual; sent Azure and McKay with the Grand on the other side of the river with an equipment of goods in charge of Azure.

Lafrance traded 350 skins in wolves in kitts from the Indians of this village, he being the person to whom I gave this outfit in charge. The Indians appeared to be of a very thievish disposition. 26th.

Went over to see Azure, and what trade he had, which was about 250 plues. Returned to the Black Cat's. Captain Lewis returned from above and stopped at the lodge.—Spoke to Charbonneau about helping as interpreter in the trade to the Big-Bellies; he told me that, being engaged to the Americans, he could not come without leave from Captain Lewis, and desired me to speak to him, which I did. Capt. Lewis told me that, as he had no business for Charbonneau but at times during the winter, he had no objections to his helping me upon 27th.

certain conditions, which agreeing to, Charbonneau promised me he would come next morning.

28th. The Black Cat went to dine with the Americans with two other chiefs, upon an invitation from Captain Lewis, who had also invited me, but, expecting Charbonneau, I declined going.

29th. Still very bad weather which, as I thought, prevented Charbonneau from coming. In the evening the weather cleared, went to see what was the reason he did not come,—was very politely received by Captains Lewis and Clarke and passed the night with them. Just as I arrived, they were despatching a man for me, having heard that I intended giving flags and medals to the Indians, which they forbid me from giving in the name of the United States, saying that the Government looked upon those things as the sacred emblems of the attachment of the Indians to their country. As I had neither flags nor medals, I ran no risk of disobeying those orders, of which I assured them.

The "Lewis
& Clarke"
expedition.

They next called Charbonneau and gave him leave to come with me, but strictly enjoined not to utter a word to the Indians which might in any way be to the prejudice of the United States, or of any of its citizens, although I should order him to do so, "which," said they, turning to me, "we are very far from thinking you would."

Their party consists of 40 odd men besides themselves, and are sent by Government for the purpose of exploring the North West countries to the Pacific Ocean, so as to settle the boundary line between the British and the American territories; likewise to make it known to the Indians on the Missouri and adjacent country, that they are under the Government of the Big Knives, who will protect them and supply them with all their wants, as long as they shall behave as dutiful children of the Great Father, the President of the United States, &c.,

&c.,—which has been the continual subject of their harangues to the Indians throughout the winter.

They showed me their passports and letters of recommendation from the French, Spanish and British Ministers at the city of Washington, which say that the object of their voyage is purely scientific and literary, and in no way concerning trade ; desiring all persons under their respective Governments to aid and assist that party as much as in their power lies, in case they should be in want of anything in the course of their voyage. They have, likewise, letters of credit from the American Government for the payment of any drafts they should draw upon it.

They left Philadelphia in the Spring of 1803, came down the Ohio, passed the winter at the mouth of the Missouri, at St. Lewis, in the Illinois country. It took them the whole summer to come to the Mandans, at which place they arrived in October last. They made treaties of peace with all the Indian nations they saw on their road, excepting the Sioux, with whom they were very near coming to an engagement. They made presents of a flag, medal, chiefs clothing, tobacco, knives, beads and other trinkets to every chief of the Indian nation which they saw, but have not given a single shot of ammunition.

They told me it was not the policy of the United States to restrain commerce, and fetter it as was the case when Louisiana belonged to the Spanish ; that we and all persons who should come in their territories for trade or for any other purpose, will never be molested by an American officer or commandant, unless his behaviour is such as would subject an American citizen himself to punishment. Nor will any trader be obliged to pay for permission to trade, as was formerly the case under the Spanish, as no exclusive privilege will be granted. Every one will be free to trade after his own manner.

Free trade
with the
Indians.

One thing that Government may do, as it has already done about Detroit and other places where opposition in trade ran

high, is to have a public store well assorted of all kinds of Indian goods, which store is to be opened to the Indians only when the traders in opposition run to too excessive lengths; for the purpose of under selling them and, by that means, keep them quiet. No *derouine* to take place, no liquors to be sold, &c.

In short, during the time I was there a very grand plan was schemed, but its being realized is more than I can tell, although the Captains say they are well assured it will.

0th.

Returned to the Mandans; Charbonneau got ready to come with me, but just as he was setting off, he received order to follow Captain Clarke, who was going with 25 men to join a party of Mandans and repulse some Sioux who killed a Mandan yesterday, and were supposed to be in the neighborhood. Went to see Azure and give him direction how to make the packs, as I intend to send to the fort very soon, having wherewith to load the Company's horses.

ECEMBER

st.

Captain Clarke's expedition did not succeed and Charbonneau joined me here this morning. Prepared to set off with him to settle the Upper Village of the Big Bellies, when Mr. McKenzie and an Hudson's Bay man arrived. We all set off together and slept at the Little Village in Mr. McKenzie's lodge.

ad.

Left this village in the morning with Charbonneau and Turenne with the Upper Village outfit, at which place we arrived at mid-day. Entered in the lodge of the White Wolf, a great chief and a well disposed Indian towards the Whites. Clothed him as a chief and harangued him, &c.; he got a good bed made for us and we fixed our goods. Gave him 30 rounds ammunition, 3 knives, 1 awl, vermillon and a few beads.

th.

Snowing very hard, wind north-west. In the evening, my man went to see the Hudson's Bay trader and found him ready to set off with an Indian, having each a small bundle on their backs. He came and told me of it, upon which, I ordered him

and Charbonneau to get ready, made a small equipment of goods into two parcels, got an Indian to guide them, and sent them in pursuit of the Hudson's Bay man who, not finding the Indians where they expected, returned. My people who were going met them, so they all returned together and arrived at eleven at night.

.....
Despairing to find the horses (1), got an old man to make a ^{13th.} harangue, offering 30 balls and powder, 1 knife and a bit of tobacco to him who would find the horses and bring them back. Gave my landlord, the White Wolf, 50 balls and powder, 2 knives, 2 awls, $\frac{1}{2}$ fathom of tobacco, 2 flints, 2 wormers and a little vermillion. Intending to set off to-morrow morning for the Fort, harangued him, &c., &c. Spoke to Charbonneau about his debt, telling that as he had two horses, he might send one in part payment, &c.; he consented, and early in the morning, I sent Morrison to Fort Mandan for the horse. Wrote a few lines to Captain Lewis and Mr. McKenzie.

Morrison arrived with Charbonneau's horse, brought a note ^{14th.} from Captain Lewis. Sent Indians to seek the horses which had not yet been found, offered 40 rounds, 1 looking glass, 1 knife and a bit of tobacco, &c., — heard that the horses had been found and left at the little village below,—set off with Morrison to go and fetch them. Returned after dark and found Mr. Heney who was just arrived from Fort Assiniboine with two Indians. He brought a letter from Mr. Chaboillez which altered my plan as to going to the Fort; so that I will now pass the winter here.

Set off with Mr. Heney to go to the Americans; slept at Mr. ^{15th.} McKenzie's.

Arrived at Fort Mandan, being the name the Americans give ^{16th.} to their Fort which is constructed in a triangular form, ranges ^{Fort Man-} dan.

(1) Lost and unsuccessfully "looked for" since several days.

of houses making two sides, and a range of amazing long pickets, the front. The whole is made so strong as to be almost cannon ball proof. The two ranges of houses do not join one another, but are joined by a piece of fortification made in the form of a demi circle that can defend two sides of the Fort, on the top of which they keep sentry all night; the lower parts of that building serves as a store. A sentinel is likewise kept all day walking in the Fort.

7th. We remained here all day. The Captain enquired a great deal of Mr. Heney concerning the Sioux nation and local circumstances of that country and lower part of the Missouri, of which they took notes *.....

3th. Slept at Mr. McKenzie and heard that 16 horses had been stolen at the Upper Village by the Assiniboines.

9th. Arrived at my lodge; the report of so many horses having been stolen was confirmed, among which were 2 belonging to the Company, and 2 to Lafrance.—People buying horses; bought a stout mule for which I paid: 1 gun, 1 large axe, 1 awl, 1 looking glass, 1 fathom (1) Hudson's Bay red strouds, 1 fathom tobacco, 2 flints, 3 strings pipe beads, 300 balls and powder, 2 knives, 2 wormers, and a little vermillion.

About sixty warriors set off to revenge upon the Assiniboines for stealing their horses. Took an inventory of the remaining goods here.

0th. Sold an old gun to Turenne to help him to buy a horse; wrote to Mr. Chaboillez, and the people set off for the Assiniboine River. Sent 6 packons of furs containing 545 kitts, 57 wolves, 4 foxes, 7 beaver, 5 bags of corn and a horse. I kept two of the Company's horses here, being so poor and sore backed that they were not able to go to the Fort. Made Morrison remain to take care of them.

(1) The French measure, then in use in the North-West, *une brassée*.

.....

 Hearing that there was a band of Indians hunting two days' 26th. march off, sent Morrison to the Americans to fetch Charbonneau, The trade. in order to go to them, as I hardly get a skin when the Hudson's Bay trader is with me, as he understands and talks their language and is known by all the Indians; my getting skins at the Big Bellies' since my arrival was owing to my having such goods as pleased the Indians, i. e., strouds, capotries, iron works, &c., which my opponent had not, but now that my trading goods are such as he has likewise, he gets nearly the whole trade.....

Last night some young men arrived with four horses which 1805, they had stolen from the Assiniboines, (which had been stolen JANUARY from them by the Assiniboines on the 18th of last month) among 6th. which was one belonging to the Company but now, by Indian law, belongs to him who risked his life in the stealing of him. They offered him to me for something less than another would have cost me. Being in want of horses I took him at the following price: 1 blanket, 1 *casse-tête à calumet*, 100 balls and powder, 1 pair leggings, 1 lance, 1 knife, 1 hoe, 1 eyed dag, a few beads.

The White Wolf, my landlord, also purchased two of his own horses back again from the same young men.....

There has been no trade going on this long while, but it is 20th. impossible to refrain making some small daily expenses, which, though they appear nothing or next to nothing, run away with more goods than is expected. Thinking on this to-day and being anxious to know how I stood in my accounts, desired Mr. McKenzie to take a general inventory of his returns and remaining goods, intending to do so myself to-morrow, as the tending

of the horses prevented my doing so to-day. Captain Clarke upon being informed that I had to take care of the horses myself, and that they were in danger of being thieved, desired I would send them down, and that he would have them taken care of with his own.

My landlord went down to the Americans to get his gun mended; they have a very expert smith who is always employed making different things and working for the Indians, who are grown very fond of them, although they disliked them at first...

.....
Went down to the American Fort to get my compass put in order, the glass being broken and the needle not pointing due north, and to see how the horses were. Arrived there at 2 P. M. Fine weather.

Journal
of
S. The Captains are busy making charts of the country through which they had passed, and delineating the Head of the Missouri according to the information they had from the Indians, who described a river as being four days march west of the last navigable part of the Missouri, which river, they say, is very large; and the Natives—whom they call "Snake Indians" or "Flat Heads"—who inhabit thereabout go, in a certain season of the year, to that river and live there entirely on fish. The course of that river, they say, is nearly south and has a placid current. The Captains make no doubt but that is a south branch of the Columbia or Ouragan River; I think it is the route they will take.

Having nothing to do at the lodge, I remained here a couple of days, being pressed to do so by the Captains. They took observations of the longitude and latitude of the place while I was with them and often since their arrival here.

They differ much from Mr. Thompson in the longitude of this place and say that Mr. Thompson has placed these villages and this part of the river a great deal too westerly, which they

think is the case with all his observations for the longitude. They observed, sometime ago, an eclipse of the Moon, which, they say, is an infallible rule for finding the exact longitude of a place. But they do not differ from him in the latitude.

They include in their territory as far north as River *Qui appelle*, for, as it was impossible for a line drawn west from the west end of *Lac des Bois* to strike the Mississippi, they make it run till it strikes its tributary waters, that is, the north branches of the Missouri and from thence to the Pacific, which could not have been done while Louisiana belonged to the French or Spanish, as those Powers would not have suffered England to give a country that did not belong to it, and, of course, a line drawn west would have stopped when it struck Spanish or French territory. Capt. Lewis fixed my compass very well, which took him a whole day.

.....

 Preparing myself in snow shoes, &c., for going to the Fort, FEBRUARY. despairing of the people's coming this winter, and being in absolute want of goods, not for these Indians, for the rascals do nothing, but for the Assiniboines who are upon this river and, to all appearances, loaded with furs, and who are going to the Fort only in the Spring.

Took an inventory of my remaining goods amounting to 45½^{7th.} plues, and delivered them to Mr. McKenzie. Bought a dog to ^{The Re-}turn. carry our provisions on the voyage and paid him 20 rounds of ammunition, 1 knife, 1 awl, 13 china beads and a little vermillon. Set off with Morrison at sunset; walked five hours, and encamped in the plains.

.....

 Set off at half after six; course, north 2½ hours, when we 9th. stopped on a hill from whence we could see two large ranges of

hills between which we had passed, one bearing S. E. and the other S. W.; River *La Souris* right before us, north; a large hill, called "The Black hill" lying west of north of us. Crossed River *La Souris* at half after nine and proceeded due north; leaving the Black Hill to our right; camped at 5 o'clock in the plains without wood; we made some water with snow in a tin kettle on a fire of buffalo dung which we had trouble enough in gathering, the ground being covered with nine inches of snow.

Slept till 10 o'clock, but the wind and cold would not allow us to remain any longer, so we set off and walked till half past two in the morning when we laid down in a hollow to wait for day break, the moon being set and the weather cloudy.

Rose at day break and found ourselves buried in snow, it snowing very hard and blowing from the north west most violently, so that we could not see ten steps before us, on account of drifting snow. I froze the end of my finger, in belting my blanket round me in the morning. Luckily we had not untackled our dog over night, so that we were soon ready.

Walked as hard as we could all day, but the strength of the wind greatly impeded our progress and made us go about six miles east of our course, which was north. Crossed the deep ravine at 10 A. M., its course is south east. At sunset, despairing of finding the wood before dark on the course we were going, and the bad weather continuing, we struck for River *La Souris*, north by east, at which river we arrived at half past seven. There being no wood upon that part of the river, we again slept without fire, but found a great quantity of reeds and bulrushes in which we buried ourselves, and passed the night. Bad weather continues.

Set off at 6 A. M., following the south side of the river, but at some distance;—our course north;—arrived at the woods at 10 A. M., being the Elk Head, where we stopped to dry our shoes and refresh ourselves with a few ears of roasted corn, which

th.
vere
d.

h.

was all the provisions we had. The weather clearing up, we set off at 3 P.M., course north, the river running nearly the same course;—crossed the river and encamped in some Indian encampments.

Set off at 3 A.M., following an Indian road which led to the 12th. Fort;—course west of north all day; River *La Souris* running parallel with us for about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles, when it gradually turned to the east. Crossed *Rivière aux Prunes* at 4 P.M.; passed my wintering house of last year at 6, and arrived at Fort Assiniboine at 8 P.M. Mr. Chaboillez was absent, having gone to River Pain Binat. Heard the news of the death of Simon McTavish, Esq., and the joining of the two companies.

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(1)

(1) Mr. Larocque remained only a few days at Fort Assiniboine, then returned to the Missouri with the intention of extending his trading venture further to the west; see, "The Mississouri Indians", by Charles MacKenzie.

MR CHARLES MACKENZIE

THE
MISSISSOURI INDIANS

A NARRATIVE OF

FOUR TRADING EXPEDITIONS

TO THE

MISSISSOURI

1804-1805-1806

FOR THE NORTH-WEST COMPANY

Mr. Charles MacKenzie joined the North-West Company as an apprentice clerk in 1803, and was immediately sent to the Missouri on several trading expeditions. This considerably developed his powers of observation, as shown by the account he has left us of these expeditions, but, unfortunately for him, they were attended with poor financial results for the Company.

Upon the abandonment of the Missouri trade, in 1807, it was his misfortune to be stationed in the region between Lakes *La Pluie* and *Monontaggé*, a district thoroughly exhausted and where he had no opportunity of proving his undoubted abilities by means of good "returns," which were very often the chief recommendation for promotion.

Mr. Mackenzie was remarkably intelligent, painstaking and energetic, but of a rather philosophical turn of mind. He stoically accepted the position which had been imposed upon him and for which, especially after

the Union of 1821, there appeared to be no remedy, as the friends upon whom he might have relied had little influence with the Hudson Bay Company, whose servant he had become.

To those who advised him to leave the country he would answer, as he did to Mr. Roderic McKenzie, that he was too much accustomed to Indian life. "It does not require much to reconcile a civilized being to the Indian life, but a mighty task to reconcile an Indian to civilized life and thinking; there is nothing for me better than remaining where I am."

Like most old Nor-Westerners, Mr. MacKenzie cordially disliked the Hudson Bay Company. He had married an Indian woman who brought him several children, and he resented to the end the marked contempt with which that company treated all Natives. In one of his letters to Mr. R. McKenzie, written while suffering under the disadvantages he experienced in obtaining a position for his son—an intelligent young man who had gone through a complete course of studies at the Red River seminary, in 1840, and had obtained the highest testimonials from his professor,—he says: "It appears the present Concern has stamped the *Cain mark* upon all born in this country; neither education nor abilities serve them" "The Honorable Company are unwilling to take Natives, even as apprentice clerks, and the favored few they do take can

never aspire to a higher status, be their education and capacity what they may ".....

" There are now 60 or 70 boys in the Red River seminary, a dozen of whom are ready yearly to enter the service in the same capacity—if they can,—better educated than the Chief Factors ".....

....." I do not see the use of so much Greek and Latin for these postmasters, since neither artificial nor natural acquirements are of any avail. "

These postmasterships, necessarily of late creation, were intermediate positions in the Hudson Bay Company's service between the clerks—the " commissioned gentlemen "—and the men, and were generally given to educated half breeds.

Unlike the generality of Indian traders, Mr. MacKenzie had a most decided partiality for the Indians, of whom, on all occasions, he made himself the apologist. His correspondence on that subject, though it would by many be considered as extreme, denotes a man of a philanthropic disposition and of strong religious convictions.

He shared the belief of many in the North-West at that time that no sufficient efforts were made by his co-religionists to Christianize the Natives and, thereby, better their condition.

" There is a rage abroad, " he wrote " for bringing barbarous nations under the pale of the Gospel, and in

no country more than in Great Britain. I doubt not but the two thirds of these are sincere, while, most certainly, the one third are interested from thirst of selfish gain.

“The Natives of Africa and Asia may well suppose that there is not a single heathen under either Great Britain or America, seeing so many missionaries and the zeal of these countries. It would surprise them to be told that there is a country under the British Government for upwards of 200 years, and a people with whom they carry on commerce and susceptible of every improvement, and yet no attempt was ever made to preach the Gospel among them. Nay, they are more degraded and degenerated than when the first European set his foot on American soil, the epoch of the setting Sun of its native inhabitants.

“There is every appearance of the quick extinction of the North American Indians, but no distant hope of improving their mind.....

“They think” (in England) “that being, as they say, “under the protection of the British Government” is enough.—What, in the name of Goodness, is that protection the British Government ever afforded the Natives of this country? Has not the British Government sold them to a monopoly?”

Mr. MacKenzie had considerable literary tastes and devoted most of his long and dreary leisure hours to

study, delighting especially in the history of his native land, the Highlands of Scotland.

His ambition was to leave the service of the Hudson Bay Company and to purchase "a patch of land" in the Red River settlement, which he did about 1846. He did not live long to enjoy the sweets of a quiet home. He died in March 1854 leaving three daughters, now dead, and a son, Mr. Hector MacKenzie, who still lives near Winnipeg.

FIRST EXPEDITION—1804.

The trading party meets with the "Lewis and Clarke" expedition.—The Americans disliked by the Natives.—The Mandans despise beaver hunting.—Kindness of the Natives.—The American officers—The Mandans, as husbandmen.—Alarm in the Mandan camp.

SECOND EXPEDITION—1805.

Cool reception by the Natives.—The Kind Old Chief.—Arrival of the Rocky Mountain, or *Corbeaux* Indians; grand festivities and speeches.—Difficulties with the *Corbeaux*; the Old Chief gets the "white men" out of trouble.—Mr. Laroque leaves for the Rocky Mountains.—Origin of the *Corbeaux*, or Crow Indians; their language.—Splendid harvest.—The return; sufferings in Prairies.

SUPPLEMENT TO SECOND EXPEDITION.

The Great Festival of the Sun; cruel follies and excesses.—Generosity of an Enasa chief.—Enasa hospitality.

THIRD EXPEDITION—1805.

A war party of the Missouri Indians.—Death of a runaway slave girl; cruel rejoicings.—Wholesale slaughter of buffalos.—Mr. MacKenzie is abandoned by his men.—Terrific snow storm in the prairie; great suffering.

Nepigon, Spring, 1809.

Roderick MacKenzie, Esq.,

Sir,

I promised at Camanistiquia to send you an account of the Mississouri (1) Indians. This I delayed from time to time, until my friend, Mr. Haldane, induced me to select from my journal the extracts which will be handed to you by him with this letter.

I wish those extracts were better and more deserving of your acceptance. I am sensible that their greatest merit consists in their veracity, for I was an eye witness of most of the scenes which they expose.

If the present specimen will please, I shall take delight in transcribing more passages for your perusal. Two motives encourage me in this desire: one is that I almost despair of ever having it in my power to testify sufficiently that grateful sense which I shall always entertain of your uniform kindness towards me; the other is, that, by reading these simple observations, you will be more able to judge whether my services, comparing them to those of others in my line, should not have recommended me to more attention in the scale of promotion than I have hitherto experienced.

I have, Sir, the honor to be,

Your very humble servant,

CHARLES MACKENZIE.

(1) The Missouri is called both "Mississouri" and sometimes "Missurie" by Mr. Charles Mackenzie. Sir Alexander Mackenzie says its proper name is "Mississouri."

FOURTH EXPEDITION—1806.

The Hooping-cough among the Indians.—The Cheyenne peace expedition.—The Indian in his home ; his domineering pride.—What a “ White Chief ” is supposed to be.—Mr. MacKenzie accompanies “ Rattle Snake ” and leaves with the Cheyennes ; grand reception.— Mode of trading *en pipe*.—Unexpected arrival of Messrs. Chaboillez, Henry and Macdonell ; Great Men should be seen from a distance.—Grand visit of the Missouri Indians to the Cheyennes ; will it be peace or war ?—The return.

FIRST EXPEDITION

1804

The trading party meets with the "Lewis and Clarke" expedition.—The Americans disliked by the Natives.—The Mandans despise beaver hunting.—Kindness of the Natives.—The American officers.—The Mandans, as husbandmen.—Alarm in the Mandan camp.

In the Fall of 1804, Mr. Charles Chaboillez, (1) one of the partners of the North-West Company, then acting in the Department of the *Assiniboine River*, having agreed with his opponents in trade, that neither party should make any out-posts exceeding those already established, found himself with more men and goods than were necessary in that quarter. He therefore thought it expedient to send the overplus to the Mandane country which was beyond the limits of his agreement, and hired for that purpose a Free-man of the name of La France.—Being the only Frenchman who was acquainted with the *route*, and having been a Missouri trader for several years, this procured to him, on the present occasion, the treble appointments of guide, clerk, and interpreter, though I must own that he was very unequal to the discharge of either of these duties.

Matters being thus settled, we watched an opportunity to steal away from our opponents, on account of the trade, and from the Assiniboines, on account of their enmity to the Indians of the Missouri. At length, finding a fair opening, we took our departure.

(1) Mr. Charles J. Bte. Chaboillez, see : "Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest" page, 81

Our party consisted of Mr. La Rocque, Mr. La France, four *voyageurs* (1) and myself. Four horses carried our assortment for the trade, and twice as many were assigned to carry ourselves, the whole in charge of Mr. La Rocque, a deserving young gentleman. As for myself, happening to be newly arrived in the Indian country, I was placed as an assistant to Mr. La France, who did not know how to write.

We proceeded; but to avoid the Natives we were obliged to lengthen our journey by taking a circuitous route, which conducted us through many extensive plains, most of which were in flames, as is generally the case at this season of the year.

In the course of a few days, we observed whole herds of buffaloes with their hair singed; some were blind, and half roasted carcasses strewed our way. We suffered great inconvenience through the scarcity of wood and water, and our horses were as badly off for water and food as we were. In this manner we joggled on until we came to the *Dog Lodge*, a remarkable place which the Sioux warriors often frequent in their hostile excursions.

After crossing this chain of mountains, we all of a sudden, heard the signal cry of Indians in a valley below us. I must acknowledge that we were not a little alarmed—but we continued our route determined to fight our way. On our approach, we discovered the Indians to be Assiniboines from *Rivière à la Souris*, one of the North-West Company's Establishments. After smoking the pipe and hearing the news, an Assiniboine, who had not taken any share in either, boldly laid hold of one of our horses. Mr. La Rocque without hesitation snatched the bridle out of the Indian's hand, then the Indian bent his bow to shoot the horse: at this moment one of our men leveled his piece,

(1) W. Morrison, Bte. Turenne, Alexis McKay, Joseph Azure. See : Mr. Larocque's journal,

and would have despatched the Indians had not Mr. La Rocque compelled him to desist.

Soon after this disagreeable interruption, a strong gust of wind, accompanied with sand and burnt dust, obscured the sky, and obliged us to seek shelter in a deep *Raveline* for the rest of the day. Our horses were left to graze close by; next morning three of them were missing. We looked in vain for them during two days, their tracks could be distinguished here and there but could not always be followed in the burnt plains, we therefore were obliged to abandon the pursuit, and gave them up as lost.

We proceeded on our journey; arriving within sight of the Missouri, the Natives flew in crowds to meet us, wishing us joy and congratulating themselves upon our appearance as traders amongst them. These were of the *Gros Ventres* nation.

Here we found four of the Hudson's Bay Company's servants, like ourselves on a trading expedition. They had arrived six days before, and informed us that, having lost their way, they had fallen in with a party of Assiniboines who detained them prisoners for seven days, and compelled them to pay handsomely for their liberty. This incident greatly diminished their stock for trade, but, expecting no opposition, they raised the value of the remainder and thereby entertained hopes of making ample amends for the loss sustained by the hostile Indians. However, the Mandanes had not entered into their views, and, finding our prices more moderate, we soon obtained the command of the whole of their furs.

Here, we also found a party of forty Americans, under the command of Captains Lewis and Clarke, exploring a passage by the Missouri to the Pacific Ocean. They came up the river in a boat of twenty oars, accompanied by two pirogues. Their fortifications for winter quarters were already complete. They had held a council with the Mandanes and distributed many

presents, but most of the chiefs did not accept of any from them.

Some time after, Captain Lewis, with three interpreters, paid a visit to the *Gros Ventres* village, and went directly to the *Serpent's* Lodge, where he passed the night. Next morning, he came to the village where I was, and observed to me that he was not very graciously received at the upper village. "I sent word ahead", said he, "to inform *La Belette qui porte des cornes* that I intended to take up my quarters at his lodge, he returned for answer that "he was not at home". This conduct surprised me, it being common only among your English Lords, not to be "at home" when they did not wish to see strangers, but as I had felt no inclination of entering any house after being told the landlord would not be "at home", I looked out for another lodging, which I readily found".

After haranguing the Indians and explaining to them the purport of his expedition to the westward, several of them accepted of clothing, but, notwithstanding, they could not be reconciled to like these "strangers" as they called them.

"Had these Whites come amongst us," said the chiefs, "with charitable views they would have loaded their 'Great Boat' with necessaries. It is true they have ammunition, but they prefer throwing it away idly than sparing a shot of it to a poor Mandane."

The Indians admired the air gun, as it could discharge forty shots out of one load, but they dreaded the magic of the owners. "Had I these white warriors in the upper plains" said the *Gros Ventres* chief, "my young men on horseback would soon do for them, as they would do for so many "wolves," for" continued he, "there are only two sensible men among them, the worker of iron and the mender of guns."

The American gentlemen gave flags and medals to the chiefs on condition that they should not go to war unless the enemy

attacked them in their villages. Yet the Chief of the "Wolves," whose brother had been killed in the fall previous to our arrival, went soon after with a party of fifty men to revenge his death. Having not found the Blackfeet Indians, who were the aggressors, or rather having found them too numerous, the party wisely retraced their steps without making an attempt; but on their return, having found some Canadians, they killed four of them and raised their scalps which were disposed of in the course of their traffic to the Rocky Mountain Indians.

About Christmas, the buffaloes drew near the villages, and we lived on the fat of the land. Hunting and eating became the order of the day. Large parties who went daily in pursuit of the buffaloes often killed whole herds, but returned only with the tongues. The wolves feasted upon the carcasses, and, thereby becoming too heavy to make their escape, were easily overcome by the hunters of the ensuing day. The Indians in this quarter seldom use guns for buffaloes, wolves &c.; for these they make use of arrows.

Beavers are plentiful, but the Indians will not take the trouble of attending to them. They often remarked to me that they would think it a pleasure to supply us with beavers if they could be secured the same as buffaloes by a chase on horseback, but they considered the operation of searching for them in the bowels of the earth, to satisfy the avarice of the Whites, not only troublesome, but very degrading. "White people" said they "do not know how to live, they leave their houses in small parties, they risk their lives on the great waters, among strange nations, who will take them for enemies. What is the use of beaver? do they make gun-powder of them? Do they preserve them from sickness. Do they serve them beyond the grave?"

I remarked that the Northern nations were very industrious and great friends to the white people.—"We are no Slaves!"

rejoined the chief. "Our fathers were not Slaves! In my young days there were no white men, and we knew no wants; we were successful in war; our arrows were pointed with flint, our lances with stone and their wounds were mortal; our villages rejoiced when the men returned from war, for, of the scalps of our enemies, they brought many. The white people came, they brought with them some good, but they brought the small pox, and they brought evil liquors; the Indians since diminish and they are no longer happy."

In February our trading goods were nearly finished, and the few goods that still remained were laid aside for a hunting party who were absent since the Fall. Apprehensive that the Hudson Bay traders had an eye upon this party, Mr. La Rocque sent for one Charbonneau, who was with the American party as interpreter, in order to accompany us and to have the start of our troublesome neighbours.

Everything being ready for our departure, the difficulty now was how to set out unperceived by our opponents. Mr. La Rocque and I agreed in opinion that the best plan would be to drive their horses out of the way. With this view, we cautiously watched until the people of the village were asleep, then the horses were detached from their confinement and quietly conducted to a considerable distance in the plains, then, thinking all safe, we saddled our own horses; but our guide, who slept apart, could not be discovered.

This incident threw us into a grievous perplexity. I set out without him, accompanied by the interpreter and another Canadian, who also was attached to the American expedition. When we got to a certain distance, we waited for day light, in the meantime, we sent Charbonneau back for the guide, but he returned without him. He, however, learnt that the Hudson Bay traders missed their horses, were alarmed and employed Indians, who soon discovered and brought them back to the

owners, who, having found out our views, went by a different route.

Mortified at my disappointment, I resolved upon continuing my journey by means of the track of the other party, but a storm of drift and snow having obscured our horizon, we lost our way and were obliged to seek shelter under the banks of a small creek, where the severity of the weather detained us three days.

Here we found plenty of buffaloes, they did not mind our presence, and we killed four of them for the sake of their hides, which we required for shelter. A party of Indians who were upon a hunting excursion fell in with our encampment; I agreed with one of them and he conducted us to our destination, where we learnt that our opponents, who had been there, had taken their departure the day before our arrival, but the Indians, having had intelligence of our approach, reserved us a share of the trade. When we returned to the village, we found our friends greatly alarmed for our safety, fearing that we had lost our way, or that we were misled by the Natives.

We were now short of goods; a band of Indians, who were loaded with furs, were on the eve of arriving, and from this circumstance our opponents might have a decided advantage over us, and the idea cast a gloom upon our party. My landlord observing this change, felt uneasy and inquired whether he, or any of his family had given offence, I said, no, but that his tribe having apparently decided in favour of our opponents, we, of course, would withdraw ourselves, never to return.

This declaration distressed the old man. He took me by the hand,—“Do not go, do not abandon me, my son,” said he, “the Indians who are coming to-morrow will be kind to you; I will go with you to their village; your mother and your sister will join us, and we shall talk of you; the Indians love

" my family, and you shall have all their furs. Take courage, my son, quiet your mind and go to rest ".

We followed this good man's advice. Next morning the old man was as good as his word; we paid a family visit to the Indians upon their arrival; his son presented them with the pipe, he himself went upon the top of a house and harangued in our favor, while his kind females were busily employed from place to place, collecting the skins until the whole was thus secured.

Two bands of Assiniboines of a hundred lodges each, who passed the winter at the Forks of the Little Mississippi, sent daily to the villages to barter for corn, beans, &c. They were troublesome to us, but they advised Mr. La Rocque to send for an assortment in order to trade their hunt, but this measure required consideration.

The snow was too deep for horses, and, for the same reason, men would require snow shoes, the frames of which could easily be provided, but no one knew how to knit them. We were informed of an old man who used to talk of snow shoes, but this man was blind with age and therefore could not afford us any assistance. The old man remarked that in the days of his youth, he, in common with many others, made use of the like for walking, and could run with them, in those days, as fast as the horses run at present.

Having been disappointed in our expectations, we went to work ourselves, and made *raquettes* by passing thongs at right angles one across another, some thing like a riddle. In the evening, Mr. La Rocque with the only man we then had remaining took their departure, accompanied by a dog to carry their provisions. The journey to the Fort and back again, we supposed might require at least twenty days to perform; I was in charge of all. The horses caused me much uneasiness, I was afraid the Indians might take a fancy to them, and carry them off.

Being now on the eve of spring, the snow began to thaw, the rills to run, and the Natives to cross their effects to their summer residence on the opposite banks of the Mississouri. Of this change, I was not aware at the departure of Mr. La Rocque, therefore no provision was made for it. To remove all the property was inconvenient; to remain with it after the departure of the Indians was dangerous; however, circumstances would only admit of the last alternative, and at length, I found myself reduced to the company and protection of my worthy landlord, who remained behind his friends merely to oblige me. He, notwithstanding, thought our situation very insecure and was consequently perpetually on his guard, being greatly in dread of the enemy.

In the day time, he repaired to the top of the highest hill in our neighbourhood; at night he could not sleep in peace and when he did slumber, it was always under arms. Seeing my hospitable friend in this continual state of alarm and anxiety, I began to feel uneasy and proposed to give communication of our apprehension to the American Gentlemen, who were stationed about nine miles from us.

The old man was highly pleased at my design, and he consented to remain about, the following day, during my absence on this message, but the same evening Mr. LaRocque made his appearance, and the old man was happy; he fired away all his powder in demonstration of his joy.

Mr. La Rocque, notwithstanding great difficulties on the way and considerable sufferings, had been very expeditious, almost incredibly so, but he was disappointed, I may say doubly disappointed. The Indians who had induced him to make the journey traded the greatest part of their hunt to others in Mr. LaRocque's absence. Nor did he find Mr. Chaboillez at home, he was on a visit to Mr. Henry's, in Lower Red River.

Report was in circulation that the company of Sir Alexander MacKenzie had coalesced with the North-West Co. both forming but one concern. This was good news, for opposition of interest creates dreadful disturbances, both in means and morals, throughout these savage countries.

Notwithstanding the difficulty of procuring horses and other necessities, our people, with those from Hudson Bay, and our returns were on the way home in less than four days after Mr. LaRocque's arrival. The Returns formed loads for seven horses.

Mr. La Rocque and I having nothing very particular claiming attention, we lived contentedly and became intimate with the gentlemen of the American expedition, who on all occasions seemed happy to see us, and always treated us with civility and kindness. It is true, Captain Lewis could not make himself agreeable to us. He could speak fluently and learnedly on all subjects, but his inveterate disposition against the British stained, at least in our eyes, all his eloquence. Captain Clarke was equally well informed, but his conversation was always pleasant, for he seemed to dislike giving offence unnecessarily.

The Missurie was free of ice the second of April, then the American gentlemen sent off their twenty oar boat, with ten men, for the United States, and, on the 8th following, the expedition proceeded up the river towards the Rocky Mountains. It consisted of one large *Pirogue* and seven small wooden canoes, containing the commanding officers, thirty men and a woman; the woman, who answered the purpose of wife to Charbonneau, was of the *Serpent* nation and lately taken a prisoner by a war party. She understood a little *Gros Ventres*, in which she had to converse with her husband, who was a Canadian and did not understand English. A mulatto, who spoke bad French and worse English, served as interpreter to the Captains, so that a single word to be understood by the party required to pass from the Natives to the woman, from

the woman to the husband, from the husband to the mulatto, from the mulatto to the captains.

I was once present when vocabularies were being made of the languages of the mandane villages ; the two Frenchmen, who happened to be the medium of information, had warm disputes upon the meaning of every word that was taken down by the expedition. As the Indians could not well comprehend the intention of recording their words, they concluded that the Americans had a wicked design upon their country.

Buffaloes and other animals are in immense numbers destroyed every winter by the Mississouri Indians. In stormy weather, whole droves run from the mountains and plains to seek shelter in the woods which form the margin of the Mississouri; many of them, attempting to cross when the ice is weak, sink and are drowned, and, in the spring, both sides of the river are in several places covered with rotten carcasses and skeletons of buffaloes, elks, &c.

These dead animals, which often float down the current among the ice for hundred of miles, are preferred by the Natives to any other kind of food. When the skin is raised you will see the flesh of a greenish hue and ready to become alive at the least exposure to the sun, and so ripe and tender that very little boiling is required. The stench is absolutely intolerable, yet the soup made from it, which becomes bottle green, is reckoned delicious. So fond are the Mandanes of putrid meat that they bury animals whole in the winter for the consumption of the spring.

The water of the Mississourie, this spring, was uncommonly low, and in consequence drowned animals were not so very abundant as usual at the breaking up of navigation. However there were still plenty, and I had opportunity of observing the courage and dexterity of the young Mandanes among the floating ice, hauling ashore some scores of these nauseous carcasses,

while the women, as active as they, were securing all the drift wood within their reach for fire.

The Mandanes are excellent swimmers; I was no less surprised to see in the drift ice the men occasionally leap from one block to another, often falling between, plunging under, darting up elsewhere and securing themselves upon very slippery flakes; yet no serious accident happened. The women performed their part equally well; you would see them slip out of their leather smoks, despising danger, plunge into the troubled deep to secure their object. Nor did they seem to feel the smallest inconvenience from the presence of crowds who lined the beach. The men and women of this place do not think it necessary to sew fig leaves together to make themselves aprons, and they are not ashamed to appear naked in public.

Drift wood supplies the villages with fuel, which, as well as the timbers for their houses, is dragged home always by the women. Horses are never employed on these occasions.

Wood is scarce here, which is the cause that villages are often removed. A great quantity of dry and green wood is required every winter, the dry for fuel, the green for provender; a certain portion of poplar branches is provided for each horse, and the bark, which the horse clears off, is reckoned little inferior to oats.

In the spring, so soon as the weather and the state of the ground will permit, the women repair to the fields, when they cut the stalks of the Indian corn of the preceding year and drop new seed into the socket of the remaining roots. A small kind of pumpkins which are very productive they plant with a dibble, and raise the ground into hillocks the same as those about Indian corn. Their kidney beans they plant in the same manner.

They cultivate a tall kind of sun flower, the seed of which is reckoned good eating dry and pounded with fat and made into

balls of three or four ounces; they are found excellent for long journeys. One of these balls, with the addition of a few roots gathered occasionally in their way, is considered sufficient for a whole day. Warriors who generally travel great distances in quest of an enemy, and who dare not raise a smoke or fire a shot, for fear of discovery, find these balls useful, light, and convenient.

The only implement used among the Mandanes for the purpose of agriculture is a hoe made from the shoulder blade of a buffaloe and which is ingrafted upon a short crooked handle. With this crooked instrument they work very expeditiously, and soon do all that is required for their supplies.

The men never trouble their heads about the labours of the field unless to reprimand the women for some noted neglect, and to sow a few squares of tobacco which, being a sacred plant, the women, who are considered unclean, must not interfere with, except in preparing the ground for its reception. The tobacco squares are carefully kept clear of weeds. The blossoms of this plant are cautiously collected and, dried in the sun, are reckoned the very best of tobacco. The plants do not exceed a foot in height; they resemble spinage and are dried the same as the flowers, then pounded and mixed with grease for use. This kind of tobacco is weak, tastes differently from ours, and the smell which the smoke emits is very disagreeable to strangers. I could not ascertain whence the Indians had that plant originally, but we must suppose it is from below, and that it found its way, the same as the horses did, from the Spaniards.

In due season, some men and horses arrived from the Assiniboine or Red river. We crossed to meet them at the Mandane Village, where we found the Indians in great alarm, having that morning discovered at the entrance of the village some strange arrows and an old shoe, insolent signals. The position of the enemy was anxiously looked for all day, in the ensuing

night several shots were heard. This created singing and dancing ; drum beating and war hoops occupied all hands to the dawn of day, when the whole village moved forward to brave the enemy, but all the vestiges they found consisted only of a dead horse with five arrows through his body. From this incident it was inferred the number of the enemy did not exceed the number of arrows found in the horse ; that these five were horse stealers, and that finding only one horse they could not make a division and therefore settled the business as is customary on such occasions, in this summary manner.

Mr. La Rocque having made the necessary preparations for our journey, we left the Mississouri on the 2nd April and arrived at Assiniboine Fort on the 22nd May, where Chaboillez received us kindly, thanked us for our winter toil, and, as a token of his approbation, made each of us a present of a horse.

So ended my first trip to the Mississouri ; my next task will be to relate the observations made in my second expedition.

SECOND EXPEDITION

1805

Cool reception by the Natives.—The kind Old Chief.—Arrival of the Rocky Mountain, or *Corbeaux* Indians; grand festivities; speeches.—Difficulties with the *Corbeaux*; the Old Chief gets the “White men” out of trouble.—Mr. Larocque leaves for the Rocky Mountains.—Origin of the *Corbeaux* or Crow Indians; their language.—Splendid harvest.—The return; sufferings in the prairies.

In the course of our first expedition to the Mississourie, having seen several Rocky Mountain Indians, we made inquiries regarding the state of their country, its trade &c. We learnt that beavers were as numerous in their rivers as buffaloes and other large animals were in their plains or meadows, which account was confirmed by an old voyageur lately from that quarter.

In consequence of this information, Mr. Chaboillez formed the plan of establishing trade with the Natives, and Mr. La Rocque was appointed to carry that plan into execution. I was ordered to accompany the expedition as far as the Mandanes.

On the 3rd of June, all was ready, and we took our departure. The party consisted of Mr. La Rocque, Mr. La France, two voyageurs and myself, provided with thirteen horses.

Soon after, falling in with a large band of Assiniboines, we experienced some difficulty to get clear of them with our property in safety. It was the same band which pillaged the Hudson Bay party the preceding fall. The Chief, who was a rogue, we satisfied underhand and we escaped unhurt. We had scarcely arrived on the banks of the Missurie, when the *Gros Ventres* sent

canoes to ferry us over to their villages. Here we were surprised to find the whole of the inhabitants with blackened faces, and the young men singing and dancing round the place with a scalp.

We observed a great change in their dress, which in many instances consisted of articles foreign to these distant tribes, viz: Russia shirting trousers, swansdown vests, corderoy jackets, calico shirts, &c., all resembling canadian voyageurs clothing, from which we had reason to suspect that these people had successfully attacked some of the North-West Company's establishment.

We enquired repeatedly how they came by these fineries, but no one seemed inclined to inform us, all gave evasive answers. However, we at length discovered that a party had been to make war upon the Blackfeet Indians and killed those who were in possession of these articles. This in a manner confirmed our doubts.

By and by the truth came out, the Indians who had reaped no benefit from the spoils, through jealousy, divulged the secret. They reported that the Chief of the Wolves, with his young men, had recently returned from a war expedition in the Blackfeet country, where they killed several of the white people and carried away their effects, which were the same that we now observed worn in the village. We immediately spoke to the Chief of the Wolves, and he acknowledged the whole as follows :

“ The evening before the attack, observing some people at a considerable distance near the banks of the great North River, I thought we discovered the enemy and my heart was glad ; We became impatient but we waited night to make our approach. Coming within a certain distance, hearing the drum beating, we delayed until all was silent, and it was the dawn of the morn when our young men fired on the tent whence we heard the drum.

“ At the first discharge the persons who were within rushed out ; it was then I discovered our error, that our attack was on white men. I was sorry, but I could not prevail on the young men to cease firing and be wise. The white men fled to their canoes, and the young men carried away the things which were left in the camp. I did not kill any of the white men, but I did believe they were *Serpent* Indians, our enemies ; I am sorry they were your friends ”.

By this discourse, we concluded that these Indians had killed some of our people on the south branch of the *Saskatchewan* river. The Indians of the village, perceiving by our countenances that we were acquainted with the outrage committed upon our friends, discontinued their rejoicings and the exhibition of their plunder.

My business being confined to the villages and their vicinity, I lost no time in adopting the necessary measures for securing the trade of that quarter. Mr. La Rocque, who was to ascend the Missouri on discovery, was opposed in his views by the Indians, who insisted upon his return to Red River without going any further on his expedition. They asserted that if the white people would extend their dealings to the Rocky Mountains, the Mandanes would thereby become great sufferers, as they not only would lose all the benefit which they had hitherto derived from their intercourse with these distant tribes, but that in measure as these tribes obtained arms, they would become independant and insolent in the extreme.

This remonstrance was made in a tone which could not fail to cause uneasiness to Mr. La Rocque and he was at a loss how to steer his course ; he therefore applied to the head chief, called the *Borgne*, who was then confined to bed, for advice. This chief is reckoned a very superior character. Mr. La Rocque exposed his difficulties ; he listened to them with attention, then, made the following reply.

"My Son," said he, "were I in health when you arrived, you should have been quartered in my tent, and the Indians would have been more civil to you; but the Indians have no sense. The Chief of the white people wishes you to visit the Rocky Mountain and you shall visit them; when I shall be well, no one dare hinder you. The Indians call for goods, but they have already too many goods; I am angry at the Chief of the Wolves; he ought to be ashamed; he has abused the goodness of the white people; he offered me part of his plunder, but I declined his offers. Have patience! my son; lend a deaf ear to bad talk. I adopted a son among the Tribes of the mountain; he is a good man, and he is a great chief. He will soon be here, and you shall accompany him and be safe.

"But hearken to my words, my son; when the Mountain Indians arrive, be kind to them, they know not white men; you will hand them your pipe of ceremony; you will clothe the chief; you will give him a flag and a stem, and you will make him a present, for he is a great man. But I shall be well then, and I will assist you. Take courage! my son, but do not throw evil medicines among the Indians."

Mr. La Rocque, deriving confidence from these favorable professions of the "Great Chief," was much relieved from his anxiety, and he assured him that he would attend to his words, think of him hereafter as a father, and would be happy to see him at our Great Fort on the Assiniboine River. We then returned to our quarters. The Indians still persisted in plaguing us, but as we were successful in our application at head quarters, we had reason to think less of their importunities.

About the middle of June, the Rocky Mountain Indians made their appearance. They consisted of more than three hundred tents, and presented the handsomest sight that one could imagine; all on horseback, children of small size were lashed

to the saddle and those above the age of six could manage a horse. The women had wooden saddles, most of the men had none. There were a great many horses for the baggage and the whole, exceeding two thousand, covered a large space of ground and had the appearance of an army.

They halted on a rising ground behind the village, and, having formed a circle, the chief addressed them; they then descended full speed, rode through the village, exhibiting their dexterity in horsemanship in a thousand shapes. I was astonished to see their agility and address, and I do believe they are the best riders in the world. They were dressed in leather and looked clean and neat; some wore beads and rings as ornaments. Their arms were bows and arrows, lances and round stones enclosed in leather and slung to a shank in the form of a whip; they make use of shields, and they have a few guns.

On the following day, the Missourie Indians, dressed in their best fineries, returned the compliment by a similar exhibition. These, having the advantage of residing in the vicinity of trading establishments, were better provided with necessaries and consequently had a more warlike appearance, but they were inferior in the management of their horses.

In the meantime, *Le Borgne* sent for us in order to introduce Mr. La Rocque to the Rocky Mountain Chief, whose name is *Nakesinia*, or Red Calf. When we offered to shake hands with this great man, he did not understand the intention and stood motionless until he was informed that shaking hands was the sign of friendship among white men; then he stretched forth both his hands to receive ours. *Le Borgne* said a great deal in favour of the Company, but he did not praise the Americans.

Mr. La Rocque's great pipe was handed round as a precious offering and each took a few whiffs; then Mr. La Rocque presented to the Red Calf a flag a stem, with some mercantile articles, and the Chief, to testify his sense of the obligation,

adopted Mr. La Rocque as Father and promised to respect and consider him as such for ever after.

Les Gros Ventres made the *Corbeaux* (for so the Rocky Mountain tribe was called) smoke the pipe of friendship, and, at the same time, laid before them a present consisting of two hundred guns, with one hundred rounds of ammunition for each, a hundred bushels of indian corn, a certain quantity of mercantile articles, such as kettles, axes, clothes, &c. The *Corbeaux* in return brought two hundred and fifty horses, large parcels of buffaloes robes, leather leggins, shirts, &c., &c.

This exchange of trading civilities took place dancing; when the dancing was over, the presents were distributed among the individuals in proportion to the value of the articles respectively furnished; this dance therefore is a rule of traffic. The Mandane villages exchanged similar civilities with the same tribe. It is incredible the great quantity of merchandise which the Missouri Indians have accumulated by intercourse with Indians that visit them from the vicinity of commercial establishments.

I traded a few things with the *Corbeaux*. Their beaver skins were badly dressed and split upon the back, in place of on the belly, a proof that they were not much acquainted with the importance of that favorite article of commerce. Afraid to ask too small a price, they seemed averse from dealing with me, for they would have a white man pay four times the value of a thing, or often let him go without.

When the *Corbeaux* Indians were on the eve of departure, the *Borgne* Chief sent word to Mr. La Rocque to make ready, and join them. He immediately began to arrange his things for the journey. The *Gros Ventres*, perceiving the intention of the preparations, crowded into our quarters and threatened Mr. La Rocque with their displeasure should he persist in his design. At this moment the Great Chief entered with a battle axe in his hand. Staring around him with an imperious air, he asked, in

a thundering tone, why so many Indians were assembled there? They answered that they came to take their last farewell of the white men, who they expected never to see again.

"Why" said the Chief, with a sneer "should you feel so much concern if the white men are inclined to risk their lives in a strange land; that is no business of yours; you have warned them sufficiently of the danger, yet they will go on". By this time the Indians, one by one, went sneaking out of the way. Then we accompanied the Chief, Mr. La Rocque leading his horse by the bridle.

When we entered the camp of the *Corbeaux*, we could perceive many of that tribe disapproved of Mr. La Rocque's intention, for some of them exclaimed "where are you going white men? return, go home, we do not wish for your company; some of our young men have no discretion; we are afraid". These insinuations had no effect on Mr. La Rocque's resolution, he was determined; but one of our party, a *Voyageur*, thought himself indisposed and applied for leave to remain with me. "I see plainly the cause of your indisposition" said Mr. La Rocque; "Your courage fails you, like an old woman; you may remain". This severe reprimand threw the fellow into a violent passion and he became extremely abusive. However, Mr. La Rocque took no particular notice of his conduct, for he could not punish so much insolence before so many strange Indians without risking the loss of their good opinion of him, and thereby the success of his expedition.

This unpleasant disagreement caused a bustle in the camp and most of the Indians collected round us. Finding this a favorable opportunity, the Great Chief and our friend *Le Borgne* addressed the strange Indians and his adopted son, the Red calf, as follows:

"My son, and my friends, rejoice!—White men are to visit your land and you will feel easy in their company, but we

" shall regret their absence. White men are curious ; they
" come from afar ; they know much, and wish to learn more.
" They are three only of their party, your party are a thousand
" and more ! You see their skin, it is white ; their hearts are as
" white as their skin ; they are good and will do you no harm.
" Give them plenty to eat, let them have the best, and be first
" served.

" Let your women be kind to them. Never ask anything from
" them, they are generous and they will pay you your kind-
" ness. White men love beaver, and they are continually in
" search of beaver for its skin. What use they make of the
" skin I know not, but they give us good things in return ; they
" exchange it for guns, ammunition, &c.

" Our fathers were not acquainted with white men ; we live
" better than our fathers lived. Do your neighbours the *Serpent*
" nation enjoy the security and happiness we enjoy ? If the
" white men could furnish them, as they furnish us, with arms,
" we should not then carry away so many of the *Serpent's*
" scalps.

" The white men are powerful, they are like magic ! there-
" fore I once more entreat you to protect with indulgence those
" I recommend. You, my son, must never let the young white
" chief out of your sight ; go with him wherever he goes ;
" should any misfortune happen to him, we shall be ashamed
" to meet white men.

" This summer I mean to visit the Great White Chief at his
" fort ; I shall tell him that his young friends are safe in charge
" of my son who is a great man, and the great chief of the white
" people will be kind to you. But I have heard some of the
" women, as I was passing through the camp, call out : " return
" " white men ! go home ! we are afraid ! " Say, my friends, what
" means this " ?

After a pause of some minutes an elderly man raising his voice, said : " We were suspicious of these white men ; we were " afraid they might throw evil medicines among us and spoil " our lands, but you have removed our fears, and you can " depend upon our good behaviour. The *Corbeaux* are in two " tribes, they have two chiefs. The Red Calf who receives " favours from the white men, and the Red Fish who receives " none ; it was the Red Fish that told us to be angry."

No sooner had the old man ceased speaking than the Red Calf addressed Mr. LaRocque, " Father," said he, " if you are " willing to go with us, we are willing to receive you, but " should an enemy stand in our way, or attack us in our " journey, you and your young men must assist us in beating " him off."

Mr. La Rocque said he would assist his friends on all occasions. Then *Le Borgne* made a harangue of great length and concluded by observing that his heart was full, and that he would be in a state of anxiety until the return of the white men.

My affairs requiring my presence in the villages I shook hands with my friend Mr. LaRocque and withdrew. *Le Borgne* has been of great service to us and, if his influence will accompany Mr. LaRoque in his journey, the Indians will be very careful not to give him any offence.

The men of the *Corbeaux* nation are generally of the middle size, inclining to corpulency, with fair complexion and a pleasant countenance. The women are handsome, but their beauty fades early, even children have grey hairs. The nation is in two tribes, *Kegh-chy-sa* and *Hey-re-ro-ka*, governed by two chiefs, the Red Calf and the Red Fish, and may muster about six hundred warriors ; they speak a dialect of the *Gros Ventres*.

The origin of the *Corbeaux* is accounted for in the following manner : Two brothers of the *Gros Ventres* named *Kegh-chy-sa*

and Hey-re-ro-ka were wicked men ; they murdered numbers of their own relations and were, in consequence, obliged to fly for safety to the distant recesses of the Rocky Mountains, where, falling in with the Flat Heads, they provided themselves with wives. The offsprings of that connexion became a new tribe, speaking a new dialect which, being a mixture of the two others, is understood by the three tribes. *Les Gros Ventres* call themselves "E-na-sa" and the *Corbeaux* "Kech-chy-sa" and "Hey-re-ro ka," while the *Corbeaux* call the *Gros Ventres* "E-na-ta" and themselves "Keigh-chy-ta," "Hen-ne-no-ta." Most of the words in both languages begin the same, but end differently as follows :

GROS VENTRE.

Arrach Bugju urrach Baga.
 Elangé Bugjé urrach Baga.
 Ma-pook-cha urrach Baga.
 Aitché shibbisha urrach Baga.

CORBEAU.

Annach Bogu minnach Baga.
 Etangé Bugich minnach Baga.
 Ma-pook-ta Minnach Baga.
 Aitché jibbla minnach Baga.

The *Corbeaux* tribes cannot pronounce the letter "V", but the *Gros Ventres* speak *Corbeau* fluently.

All these tribes dress in the same manner ; the men have long hair which trail to the ground, but to make it appear long they add horse hair by a cement of gum. They comb only the forehead and, for combs, they substitute porcupine tails. The women are careless about their hair which scarcely reaches the shoulders ; to make it look fine they sometimes throw a little water over it.

The *Corbeaux* do not cut off joints of their fingers, nor slash their own flesh as the *Gros Ventres* do, but they are much addicted to an abominable crime, the crime of sodomy (1).

(1) Details unfit for publication.

.....

About the beginning of August, the free-men whom we had despatched on our arrival to our establishment on the Red River returned, and informed me that Mr. Alexander Henry had arrived from Fort William. Concluding that a change had taken place in our department, I became anxious for my departure.

After the Rocky Mountain Indians were gone, I had scarcely any occupation and saw little or nothing worthy of notice. Several bands of Assiniboines, Crees and *Sauteux* visited the villages, but nothing strange occurred.

I must not forget to mention that there was a fine harvest at the Missourie this season. I never witnessed anything equal in richness to the appearance of the fields. The stalks of the Indian corn were generally eight feet high, the leaves of the kidney beans were entirely covered with blossoms, promising abundance; the pumpkins were already gathered, cut into slices and dried in the sun ready for use.

On the 15th of August, I crossed the Missourie with seven horses; here I lost half a day waiting for my fellow traveller, Mr. Lafrance; he had three horses, but he gave me a very poor account of the property entrusted to his care, which did not realise half the value.

In the evening we, left the banks of the Missourie; eight horses carried our returns; Lafrance led the van, I, in the rear, drove the horses after him. In this manner we jogged on, and no one can judge of the difficulties which we had to encounter but such as have travelled in the same route and with a like encumbrance, travelling from the break of day to dusk. Still our daily progress was small.

Our route was through plains or meadows so thickly covered with buffaloes that we were often under the necessity of frightening them out our way with gun powder, and we were

in constant dread of being overrun and crushed by them at night in our encampments. The flies were extremely troublesome and tormenting, and we had no means for fire but dry dung which burned like spunk. Provisions were supplied daily as required from the chase.

After leaving the buffaloe meadows a dreadful scarcity of water ensued. We had to alter our course and steer to a distant lake, where we went to encamp but, when we got there, we found the lake dry; however, we dug a pit which produced a kind of stinking liquid of which we all drank; it was salt and bitter, caused an inflammation of the mouth, left a disagreeable roughness in the throat and seemed rather to increase than diminish our thirst. Our horses also partook of this unsavory beverage. We passed the night under great uneasiness; next day, we continued our journey, but not a drop of water was to be found any where on our route, and our distress became unsupportable. Lafrance lost his patience and swore so much that he could swear no more; he gave the country ten thousand times to the devil. At length his eyes became dim and we believed that he was drawing near a serious crisis.

All at once our horses became so unruly that we could not manage them; we observed that they showed an inclination towards a hill which was close by. It struck me that they might have scented water in that direction, and I immediately ascended to the top of the hill when, to my great joy, I discovered a small pool of water at a small distance from me. Forgetting the distress of my fellow traveller through the excess of my own, I ran to the pool and drank plentifully, my horse plunged into it before I could muster time to prevent him. I then returned to the edge of the hill and beckoned to Lafrance, who was still at too great a distance to hear me. When he reached me at last, the poor man seemed more dead than alive, his countenance was entirely changed into a dark hue and a

thick scurf affected his mouth. He instantly got into the water, of which he partook so plentifully that I was fearful of the consequences. The horses also drank to excess and I was afraid they might be injured also.

After resting for some time in the vicinity of the water, we resumed our course, but did not proceed far when our recent extravagant libations began to tell both upon ourselves and upon our horses. Notwithstanding this, we thought prudent to return and pass the night at the same pool as we might have fared worse by continuing, and have been obliged to encamp without water.

Next morning at day break, we went on and that evening arrived at the Fort, where I found Mr. Henry in charge, he and his people in a state of starvation. We were welcome guests for we had plenty of provisions.

So ended my second expedition to the Missurie.

SUPPLEMENT TO THE SECOND EXPEDITION

The Great Festival of the Sun; cruel follies and excesses.—
Generosity of an Enasa Chief.—Enasa hospitality.

July 10th 1805.—To celebrate the Great Festival, all the old men of the Enasa village assembled at the lodge of the First Chief to appoint proper officers in order to keep the peace during the ceremonies.

11th. This morning at day break, an old man harangued through the village: soon after appeared twelve robust young men with their heads in bladders, bodies bare, painted half way with vermillion and half with white earth, the emblems of punishment and pardon united in the same person. These guardians of the peace entered into every lodge, giving instruction for good behaviour. The women were directed to go into the woods for branches to cover the Medecine lodge, while the men were occupied in dressing themselves.

When all were ready, the men walked into the lodge with their pipes and drums, the women went with kettles and dishes full of the best of things to prepare for the feast. At the door of the lodge, the vessells, were aired over a blasing fire made of certain hay or weeds selected for the occasion, and ample offerings were variously made to the Sun. When the eating part was over, the remainder of the day was joyfully passed in innocent recreation, such as smoking, dancing &c.

In the forenoon of the 12th, several young men placed themselves in a row on their bellies; an old man holding an arrow approached them and with the barb of it pierced a hole at the shoulder blades of each, through which he passed a pin of hard

wood about four inches long and half an inch thick. To this pin he fastened a cord of eight yards in length at the end of which were tied seven bulls' heads or more, according to the repute of the warrior. Such as had killed some of the enemy and taken scalps had a man's skull fixed to each breast and a scalp fastened a little below their eyes, with a cane in the right hand, to which also was fastened a scalp. But such as were less succesful in war were not distinguished by so many ornaments; they had not the honor of dragging so many bulls heads after them, and their canes, in lieu of human scalps, were graced only with eagle tails. These young warriors were entirely naked, but painted white.

When the old man had finished this first part, the young warriors started up and moved forward, but the bulls head which they trained having their horns entangled rendered their progress slow and painful. One, however, who was more loaded than any of the rest, rushed through the crowd, unmindful of all obstacles which stood in his way, and soon gained his destination in the Great Lodge, where he was received by a multitude of spectators with shouts of applause. The others would fain have followed the example, but their hearts failed them; they often leaned on their canes.

As the warriors arrived at the lodge, all the heads were thrown on a high beam, and their weight serving as a counterpoise raised the bearers from the ground. In this position they remained suspended like so many criminals upon a gibbet.

In the mean time, spectators of all sexes and sizes united in singing, dancing and beating their drums &c., while the old man approached the principal *Hero* and asked him what he was disposed to offer to the Sun, so that the Sun might continue to shine upon him with kindness: "I shall give to the Sun," said he "in order that he may shine upon me with kindness, two "strips of flesh from each of my arms, beginning at my shoulder

" blades and finishing at my wrists; I shall also give to the Sun
" one of my fingers, and shall allow you, moreover, to imprint
" with a red hot iron an emblem of the Sun upon my breast.

The same question was put to each of the others, who where fifteen in number, but they were much more moderate in their devotional donations. They contented themselves with giving a finger or a slice of flesh respectively.

The old man, who was provided with the necessary instruments for the execution of his duty, began his operations upon the boldest of the heroes. He began by cutting on the shoulder two circles from which he raised two strips in parallel lines down to the wrist, then the little finger of the right hand was cut off at the second joint, and then the bit of a bridle was introduced, red hot, and applied to the breast until the flesh in a large circle rose into a hard crust. All this time, the sufferer as well as his companions on trial where hanging suspended from the beam of the lodge by the cords through the incision in their shoulders, their feet at some distance from the ground and unable to stir during the operation. The noise of the spectators was very great; if the sufferers complained, they could not be heard.

As soon as each had undergone the pains he had imposed upon himself, he was relieved from his elevated station at the beam and allowed to return from where he came, still dragging his original *équipage* of heads, until he placed the whole where he found them, and where fit persons were stationed on purpose to untie and receive them.

When the wooden pins were taken out of the shoulders, an old woman sucked the blood from the wounds, which she stuffed with a preparations made with her teeth from a certain root for the purpose. Then the suffering *hero*, or whatever we may choose to call him, took his strips of flesh and his finger joint, placed them in a neat little bag, with which he hastened to the

outside of the village to depose it as an offering to his God, and singing a lamentable dirge as he went on.

Tired of so dreadful a scene, I withdrew and returned to my quarters, where I found the guards of police indulging with the girls during the absence of their parents. As to the warriors, the sun was high the next morning before the last of them left his companions stand at the beam to take his painful turn before the old priest.

The old priest was handsomely rewarded for his trouble and attendance, the young warriors on whom he operated so signally loaded him with presents, and, the next morning, he was one of the richest men in the village.

The Indians, as it is well known, are extremely attached to their children, and become inconsolable when they have the misfortune of losing any of them; such is their distress, that they throw away all their property, cut off joints of their fingers and commit a thousand extravagances; on the other hand, they are cruel enemies, and will go any length for revenge. Still there are surprising instances of generosity evinced among them. The following, in particular, deserves to be mentioned.

In the fall of 1804, a party of Enasas being in need went towards the Rocky Mountains in search of horses, which they determined to make their own, wherever found. After travelling several days in vain through extensive plains, they came to the foot of the Rocky Mountains and resolved upon crossing them. In a valley beyond the first range, they discovered a small camp of Flat-head or Snake Indians of four or five tents, which, in the following night, they approached. At day break next morning, the men of the camp mounted their horses and rode off for the chase. The warriors taking advantage of the absence of the men, fell upon the camp and destroyed all the women and children within their reach and carried away the property.

Looking out for horses among the rocks in the vicinity, they perceived in a small cave a women making her escape with her two children, whom they persued, but upon coming near, the chief was seized with compassion. The women was beautiful, and he spared her life and that of her two children, made them all his captives and carried them off to the Missurie.

The hunters, on their return to the camp, finding the cruel ravages of an enemy during their absence, became distracted. The husband of the captive, not finding a vestige of them among the slain, searched for them among the rocks. He called his wife by her name ; some of the other women who had the good fortune to escape the massacre, recognising his voice, flew from their hiding places and mingling their cries and tears with his, informed him that the enemy, who was then scarcely out of sight, after destroying the camp, had been looking out for the horses among the rocks and had discovered his wife and children, whom they carried away as slaves.

He immediately formed the bold and desperate resolution of persuing the enemy, in hopes of an opportunity for retrieving his loss. His friends endeavoured to persuade him to the contrary, but he would not hearken to reason, and instantly departed. He soon came in sight of his enemies, watched night and day unperceived in their rear for more than a month without finding an opportunity, when, at length, he reached their village. The war chief, having by this time determined upon making his beautiful Captive his wife, applied to his father-in-law to adopt her as his daughter, by which means the children would be naturalized and considered of the *Enasa* nation.

The unfortunate husband now having lost all hopes of ever seeing or recovering his family by stealth, determined on sacrificing himself. He ascended to the top of a high hill which was

in the vicinity of the village, and boldly made his appearance, singing his death song.

The Enasas, seeing this stranger, became alarmed, thought he was a spy and that the enemy was at hand. The village assembled and consulted; the men armed and in a body ascended the hill. When within a small distance, the stranger, in a firm and loud voice, hailed them as follows:

“ Enasa nation! You, who are the authors of my wretchedness, be not alarmed where there is no danger. You see me naked and alone; I have no arms; I am a Flat-Head; my friends are beyond the great mountains; they are in mourning, but I am not here out of revenge for their loss, I came for my wife and my children whom your young men have carried away captives. If they are your slaves, make me also your slave: if they are not among you, and are no more, let me go with them to the land of spirits.—There, Enasas, despatch me! I cannot live!—I am your enemy!”

Moved with compassion, the Enasas received the unfortunate stranger with kindness, conducted him to their village and not only returned him his wife and children, but also gave him four horses loaded with presents, and invited him to remain in the village as long as he pleased. He declined staying for any time, but assured them that the desire of his speedy return arose entirely from a sincere wish of testifying to his friends the happiness he enjoyed, and to make them as sensible as himself of the high value that ought to be placed upon the friendship of the Enasas.....

..... After these protestations of everlasting friendship, the Flat-Head, his wife and children took their departure, promising that he and his friends would pay the village a visit, the ensuing summer. He kept his word, for I was present, as already mentioned, when three hundred tents of Rocky Mountain Indians

made their appearance. It was then that I was acquainted with the preceding circumstances.

The Enasas make it a rule to protect all strangers from insult or injury while they remain within the limits of their villages; even the natural enemies of their own tribe are safe there. On this account, the Enasas villages have become a sanctuary for fugitives from all the neighbouring tribes, who go about fearlessly, speaking their respective languages. These strangers cannot, however, be accomodated with wives from among the nation, but must confine themselves to slaves or to women taken in war. Even the Mandans, who are neighbours, are treated as strangers in that respect.

Some of these strangers often make an ungrateful return; they often destroy their benefactors and fly to their own country with their scalps, and thereby obtain forgiveness for the offence which caused their banishment. Though the Enasas are sensible to this treachery from dire experience, they still encourage the perpetual presence of strangers, for they sometimes find it convenient to make use of them as interpreters to traffic with the many Indians who resort to that quarter in the summer season, and, sometimes, as ambassadors to distant nations, for arrangements of differences.

I happened to be acquainted with one of these strangers, who was of the Arriquiria tribe and had lived with the Mandans several years. He was a handsome bold fellow, but a great rogue, and was the cause of much bloodshed to his protectors, who had employed him occasionally as an ambassador and whom he had been in the habit of betraying, by giving information to the enemy. In consequence, a consultation of the wise men took place and his death was determined, but none of the tribe were willing to execute the sentence.

Being thus embarrassed, they sent a deputation to the famous War Chief of the Enasas tribe to inform him of the teachery of

the Arriquiria Indian, of the sentence of the chiefs and the inability of the Mandan Indians to do it justice, at the same time insinuating a wish that he should favor them with his services on the occasion. He understood their drift and replied : " Is it true that the Mandans have not courage enough in their tribe to manage a bad dog, and must my hands be everstained with the blood of their enemies ! But since the safety of my friends the Mandans depends upon the strength of my arm and the boldness of my heart, this bad dog shall not see another day ". At this, he started from his seat, laid hold of his battle axe and desired two of his young men to follow him.

Arrived at the Mandan village, he immediately entered the tent of the Arriquiria Indian ; they talked familiarly together until the accused, perceiving the evening approach, got up and said it was time for him to look out for his horses.

The Enasa got up also and accompanied him, attended by his two young men, to the outside of the village, where there was a remarkably large stone. " Look here ! comrade ", said the Chief, " I dreamed last night that this stone was stained with your blood, and my dream must be fulfilled this evening. Go, however, go for your horses and pass here on your return ; do not disappoint me, you know I can always find you, even in the center of your own nation ". " If I should not pass here this evening with my horses ", said the *Arriquiria* " It will not be through the apprehension of danger from you, my friend ", and he went his way. The Chief instructed his young men, and each took his station. When the *Arriquiria* Indian, on his return, came to the fatal stone, the Chief gave the signal and the young men shot the guilty Indian through the heart. The body was left to the wolves. The Great Chief returned home loaded with presents and praise.

THIRD EXPEDITION

Fall of 1805.

A war party of the Missouri Indians—Death of a runaway slave girl ; cruel rejoicings — Wholesale slaughter of buffalos— Mr. MacKenzie is abandoned by his men—Terrific snow storm in the prairies and great sufferings.

Mr. De Rocheblave, who succeeded Mr. Chaboillez in the Red River department as manager of the Company's concerns, did not approve of the Mississouri trade, but, from the measure already taken, he was under the necessity of continuing that business for another season, and I was appointed to conduct it.

On the 18th November, to our great joy, our worthy friend Mr. Larocque and his party made their appearance from their visit to the Rocky Mountain.—It is not necessary that I should give the particulars of his journey, as Mr. Larocque himself has kept an account of it, I shall merely observe that he was disappointed in his expedition, suffered great hardships and took no less than thirty six days on his return to our establishment. He remained a short time with me at *Montagne à la Bosse*, the post I had in charge when I accompanied him to head quarters. Mr. de Rocheblave was relieved from much anxiety by his arrival and he received him with great kindness.

The arrival of Mr. Larocque in the Department having rendered my presence less necessary, matters were speedily arranged and I took my departure on the 24th November, on my expedition to the Mississouri country. Three men and six horses accompanied me, with an assortment for the trade ; but

no less than five other traders, forming as many different interests, had taken the lead of us for the same quarter.

When I arrived at the Missouri, my friend *Le Borgne* received me with open arms and conducted me to his tent but, finding the Hudson Bay traders there before me, I observed to the chief that they and I, having contrary objects in view, could not agree together. He offered to send them away, but knowing that his tent was not the most suitable to my purposes, I thought it more advisable to thank him for his good intentions, then went directly to my old landlord's tent, where I was cheerfully received and presented with a horse, in testimony of his friendship and countenance. Indeed, all the Indians seemed happy to see me again among them, which promised in my favor a decided advantage over my opponents.....

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About this time the Missouri Indians, to the number of 350 warriors, under the influence of the False Horn Chief, went to war towards the Sioux country. After an absence of four days, the party returned. They met the enemy, gave them battle, which lasted for a whole day, killed and wounded many, and brought with them seven scalps; but their party suffered also, for it had one killed and seven wounded. On this occasion the Indians went through the usual ceremony of singing and dancing around the village with the new scalps, but the relatives of the unfortunate warriors turned all their own effects out of doors, and did not join in the rejoicings.

Next day, the people of our village went to the Mandan village to a dance. Their dance was entirely confined to the young women of the different villages, dressed in their leather smocks and finest ornaments. These females went around the village, dancing and singing the praise of the young victorious warriors. They received presents, which they did not carry away but left on the spot.

A servant of the Hudson Bay Company who happened to be present among the spectators, carried off, in the presence of his master, a fine horse and two buffaloe robes elegantly painted. I could not admire this conduct. As the white people were not at the war party, and had not furnished anything towards the dance, they certainly had no claim on the property it produced, which, I conceived, was given and abandoned from religious principles by the Natives, as a sacrifice.

The preceding night the noise was so great that I could not sleep a wink. Next day, all the villages having had their turn, I had reason to hope that the affair was ended, but I was greatly mistaken; they continued their merriment for a whole fortnight, when it was succeeded by another, which was derived from an incident of a most cruel nature.

A young man, brother to the Great Chief, sent for me to his lodge or tent. After exchanging the usual civilities, he observed that during my absence, in the summer, he had been at war.

"I killed," said he, "a *Serpent* chief, two young men, with several women and children. I saved a young slave and brought her here; I used her kindly, for I intended her for you, but, at the end of three days, she deserted in the night, and carried off a fine horse from my tent.—"Where did she go?" I said: "She went to her relations where she is arrived before now."

"This is the third time she was taken prisoner, and the third time she effected her escape. The former times, she carried nothing away but her own simple robe, but, this time, she is well dressed and has two knives. She is very pretty; none of our own women equal her; she is the greatest beauty of all the Indian tribes, and we know the White Man would love her, and would give a generous price for her. I saved her life on account of the White Man".

"I wish you had not been so merciful, my son," exclaimed an old woman; "I wish you had killed the b....., for she has stolen my knife, which I had for three winters; it was a good knife, only the handle was broken". "Yes," said a young girl from the opposite corner of the tent, "the bad slave has stolen my knife also; I wish she was dead!"

These wishes were not lost! A short time after, while the village was still in an uproar, rejoicing for their late success in war, four young men who had been employed in the pursuit of the flying beauty, appeared with her head at the end of a pole, which they planted in the door of the tent whence she had made her escape, and the horse she had stolen was delivered to the owner. They then retired in silence to their respective tents; nor did the men of the village heed their arrival, for they considered the head or scalp of a woman beneath their notice.

Not so the women; overjoyed at the spectacle, they collected around in great numbers dancing and turning it into ridicule. They pulled it by the hair from the pole, tossed it with their feet from tent to tent throughout the village, exclaiming. "There is the enemy: take care! be kind to her!" At length the head was consigned to the boys as a mark for their arrows.

The men who went to look out for this unfortunate woman followed her track by means of marks she left where she dugged up roots for her sustenance. When she reached the mountain, thinking herself beyond research and safe, she took her time, killed a buffalo with her bow and arrows, built a cabin of green branches and began to dry and prepare a stock of provisions for her journey across the mountains to her own country. The young men having lost her track, they wandered several days in the mountains, and it was on their return home that they accidentally fell in with her hut and despatched her by plunging lances into her bosom.

The winter being far advanced and considerable drifts of snow on the ground, thousands of buffaloes resorted to the vicinity of the villages. We had great pleasure in seeing the Indians go into the fields, surround and kill whole droves of them ; the best parts only of the meat were taken home, the rest remaining to rot in the field. At times the Indians would congregate in great numbers and continue to drive large herds to the banks of the Missouri and, by gradual approaches, confine them into a narrow space where the ice was weakest, until, by their weight and pressure, large square of ice, some of fifty yards, would give away and vast numbers of animals were plunged into the river and carried by the current under the solid ice to a " *mare* " a little below, where they again emerged, floated and were received by crowds of women and children, provided with proper hooks and instruments to haul them on the ice, which, in a short time, became strewed with dead carcasses. Here they were left for some time to take flavor, then carried home and considered a great delicacy.

All the traders who were in opposition to me having despaired of any success, returned to the Red River and left me in the sole possession of the Mississourie trade. I now divided my assortment into small parcels, and made several outfits, which I placed under the charge of my men for the purpose of carrying on the business with the Natives to the best advantage ; my success, generally, did not fall short of my expectations.

On the eve of my departure for home, the Black Cat, a Chief with whom some of my men had lodged in the Mandan village, sent me word by an Indian to call at his tent as soon as possible. This I did immediately and asked him the cause of so pressing an invitation. " Your white men ", said he, " do not mean to return with you ; they have disposed of their own private property in favor of the Indians and would have done the same with yours, but I knew that they were bad white men ;

" they were dealing with bad women and I have secured your " property ". I thanked the Chief and then expressed a wish to cross in order to adopt steps for the punishment of these bad white men. " No " said the Chief, " that will cause difficulties, for the Indians are bound to protect all strangers." Seeing I could not do justice to my feelings without creating a disturbance, I had, with the assistance of the Indians, all my property transported to the upper village.

Two days after, I went down with Morrison to my deserted residence, saw my men, tried to persuade them to return to their duty, but they would not yield. I was therefore obliged to leave them and hire a free-man in their place. This was in the month of February and, the first fine weather, we took our leave of the Missurie. We had ten horses loaded with returns, including provisions.

The first day we travelled until dark in hopes of falling in with a good spot of grass for our horses, but the plains having been burnt in the fall and covered with buffaloes all winter, the whole country was as bare as the palm of the hand; scarcely a sprig of grass was to be seen in any direction. We encamped in a swamp of dry rushes, cleared a small space from snow, kindled a fire with small bits of dry wood provided for the purpose and, after eating corn cakes and drinking snow water, we laid down to rest. It snowed in the night and the air was raw, still we had a comfortable rest under the new fallen snow, which completely covered our beds.

In the morning, we discovered that seven of our horses were missing and could not be found in the vicinity of the camp. We, therefore, secured our baggage under the snow, mounted the three remaining horses and returned to the village. Here we learned that the missing horses were in the possession of an Indian who, on application, readily surrendered them. He gave us lodging for the night and treated us with great kindness.

Next morning, we set out early, found our baggage safe, loaded and continued our course until night came on, without seeing any appearance of wood for fire, nor grass for our horses. We found it, therefore, necessary to continue. I desired Morrison, who led the way, to guide his course by the North Star; the other man did not seem easy, he, however, did not complain, but soon after began to lag behind.

As we advanced in our journey, the snow became deeper and deeper; to pass over some heaps, we were at times obliged to unload, this made travelling, particularly at night, very unpleasant. About midnight, the sky darkened, the stars disappeared and a dreadful storm arose from the North. Having no stars to guide us, I desired Morrison to continue keeping the wind directly in his face and that I would endeavour to drive the horse after him. We had not advanced far in this manner when we heard the other man, Roy's voice from a distance in the rear. We, of course, waited his arrival; he complained of fatigue and indisposition, then threw himself down upon the snow *à corps perdu* exclaiming: "*Je ne partirai jamais d'ici, ni mort ni en vie*". We represented to him the critical situation we were in, and the very great danger we should run by stopping in the open plain, exposed without any shelter to the violence of the storm.

The poor man would not or could not hearken to reason. Seeing him in danger of losing his life if abandoned, I ordered the horses to be unloaded, and with the baggage we formed a rampart or screen as shelter against the storm. We then made a bed of buffalo robes upon which we placed the sick man who was motionless, and we feared he was gone or next thing to it. We rubbed his face, hands and feet, wrapped him in plenty of blankets, and in a short time we could perceive some symptoms of life. He was restored, but we suffered severely from the cold while attending him.

To secure the horses, we tied them to the baggage, then covered ourselves with the buffaloe robes. Had it not been for that hardy and excellent man, Morrison, neither I nor Roy would have passed the night.....

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In the morning, the snow was on a level with the top of our rampart, and so heavy above our buffaloe robes that we had some difficulty to move under the load. Two of the horses broke their halters in the course of the night, but did not go far out of the way and Morrison soon got them back; the others were standing with the snow up to their bellies, their four feet close to one another, trembling with cold and their bridles frozen in their mouths. We however loaded them, and, having wrapped ourselves up in robes, we set out, but the drift and snow were so heavy that we could not see the distance of fifty yards.

With no marks to guide our steps, we kept on all day at random, but, by observing the direction of the wind, we endeavoured to keep the same direction. Towards the evening, the drift passing in separate columns, as it were, before the wind, gave us an opportunity of descriing at a distance the appearance of trees, to which we immediately repaired, and we came to a small creek with plenty of wood and water. I cannot describe my feelings on this occasion; my heart leaped with joy, nothing on earth could have given me more pleasure. We were provided to our satisfaction, but our horses, poor animals! were almost dead with cold, fatigue, and hunger. Having been four days without eating, they could scarcely muster strength to stand upon their legs. We procured for them the tops of trees of which they seemed to partake with good appetite.

The following day, we still had bad weather, but we remained in our camp untill the afternoon, when the sky cleared and we discovered that we had considerably gone out of our course.

We now went on straight and got to *Rivière La Souris*, where the bad weather again detained us. The snow was very deep and fatiguing for the horses. Morrison made *traines* which did not avail us much. I despatched him a head to the Fort for assistance. Having come to a lake, we pierced the ice for water but, being shallow, we found it frozen to the bottom : we therefore collected ice into heaps and, wood being near, we lighted fire on the top of the heaps which, as they melted, made water for the horses who licked them for drink.

At length Morrison returned with men and dogs who took our baggage, I and one of the men took the horses in charge, but the horses unfortunately gave up and I was under the necessity of abandoning them. Next day, we got to the Fort, which was the twenty third from the Missurie. The desertion of my men at the Mandans, and the failure of the horses on the way home cast a cold on my reception. However, when my returns were examined and the horses were recovered, my expedition was thought more of and, in the end, I had no reason to complain.

FOURTH EXPEDITION

1806

The hooping cough among the Indians.—The Cheyennes' peace expedition.—The Indian in his home; his domineering pride.—What a White Chief is supposed to be.—Mr. Mackenzie accompanies "Rattle-snake" and leaves with the Cheyennes; grand reception.—Mode of trading "*en pipe*".—Unexpected arrival of Messrs. Chaboillez, Henry and Macdonel.—Great men should be seen from a distance.—Grand visit of the Missouri Indians to the Cheyennes.—Will it be peace or war?—The return.

Previous to the departure of Mr. de Rocheblave for the Headquarters of the North West Company on Lake Superior, Mr. Caldwell and I had orders to visit the Missurie, as usual, for the purposes of trade. We accordingly set out on the 4th of June, accompanied by a freeman, with six horses belonging to the Company.

To avoid the danger of falling in with war parties and strange Indians, we went by a round about way and arrived on the banks of the Missurie without any accident. The country looked beautiful at this season, but the Natives looked more gloomy than usual, owing, we soon learned, to the recent loss of some of their young men, killed in a war expedition, and to the absence of a party of about 600 warriors, who had gone to revenge that loss.

The hooping cough, moreover, was then raging throughout the country and had already carried away 130 persons, old and young, in less than a month. The aged who were attacked by

this disorder met with little attention and were soon carried away. The attention paid to children was, however, very great. It was not a strange thing to see two or three dead in one lodge, the bodies remaining there unburied until the stench became so great that the survivors were compelled to remove them.

The disease began to slaken soon after our arrival and, the warriors having returned successful, the lamentations ceased. The war party, who were absent two months, returned in triumph with three scalps! War parties generally content themselves with attacking the first enemy they meet, and return as soon as they have killed and drawn blood, thinking themselves entitled to equal laurels and equal honors whether the contest was severe or easy. This war party paraded the villages for several days, singing and dancing, with the scalps at the end of long poles. Many of the sick joined in the rejoicings and we had to do the same, *car avec les loups il faut hurler !*"

I believe that whoever has studied the Indians and the nature of their passions must have been struck with their versatility. Their whole life is a life of extremes. No being can bear with more fortitude a wound inflicted at war, but should they cut their feet accidentally with an axe, should they fall sick, they are quite the reverse. They are indolent, capricious, contemptuous, revengeful and domineering to the extreme, and yet their passions do not seem to disturb the quiet of their mind, which almost always appears regular and calm.

It is when they return from the chace that their predominant passion, domineering pride, has its complete sway. It is then a stranger can see how an Indian is respected in his own hut. He no sooner appears but every one hurries to clear his way lest his feet should be entangled on his entering; every work is abandonned, every appearance of mirth disappears, no one dares salute him or even look at him in the face.

After having put by his weapons, he will seat himself on his hams before a blazing fire with a great composure and air of dignity. The most slavish of his women (they have in general more than one) will approach him and take off his shoes and leggins, while another brings him water to drink and a third prepares his meal, which he devours without saying a word. All wish to know of his good or bad luck, but no one dare make an enquiry.

My Lord being now satiated and his first pipe smoked nearly to the bottom, he will, in a solemn and low tone, begin to relate the adventures of the day. If successful, he will tell the women where they may find the animals, with every detail relating to the chase. If not successful, he will blame the women for not having paid sufficient attention to his commands; he is sure that they have given certain bones to the dogs, &c., he has had bad dreams the night before; he has, in the morning, met with certain birds and insects; he could not expect success after such negligence, so many bad omens. He never thinks of blaming himself for his bad success.

But, to return to business; on any arrival, I found that some of the freemen to whom I had given goods on credit the preceding winter had made a good hunt towards the upper part of the Missourie. These men paid what they owed, and traded a quantity of furs which they had over and above. The Indians were equally successful, so that my stock of merchandise was soon disposed of to advantage, but an appointment I had made with a Canadian sent from the fort to deal with the Pawnee nation detained me for a longer period than I expected.

About this time, a band of Shawyens or Chawyens came to offer terms of peace to the *Gros Ventres* and *Mandans*. They were received with great seeming friendship and handsomely entertained for several days. At their departure, they were assured of the peaceful dispositions of the villages and, as a

token of friendship, they promised that a young man taken in war some years before and then a prisoner, would be given up to his father whenever he should come for him.

Soon after, the father appeared accompanied by a number of young men. They brought a message from their Great Chief inviting in the warmest terms a young Chief he had noticed in battle, to pay him a visit. The young man who was also a great Chief among the *Gros Ventres* and renowned for his exploits at war, was willing to accept the invitations, but the majority of his people, fearing treachery, opposed his departure. Many councils were held on this occasion but all to no avail. "Rattle Snake", fearing that his character would be attacked by those who envied him, and that his courage would be doubted by his enemies, resolved to conquer all opposition and finally carried his point.

I resided in the Borgne's tent ; it was there that all strangers paid their first visit, and that all the wise men assembled on great occasions. I consequently had a good opportunity of learning what was going on.

All strangers treated me with the greatest kindness ; those who never had seen a white man looked upon me with great admiration and curiosity ; many were afraid to approach me, but most of them were, by far, too inquisitive and wished to ascertain if I was in every respect the same as Indians. The Shawyens had seen and traded with several white people, though they had no traders on their lands ; they were very friendly to me as I could understand them and be understood by the common signs of the Plain Indians.

They strongly pressed me to go with them, saying that they would load two horses for me with beaver. The remainder of my goods was not worth £5—and that of very inferior quality—, and I knew that they would bring a far better price at the Shawyens than they would at the Missouris. I therefore resolved

to accompany Rattle Snake, to the great annoyance of the *Gros Ventres*, who would not hear of my going there with goods, but concealed their real motives under pretense of my personal safety.

I showed them the goods I intended to take with me, after having divided them in two, and told them I would leave Mr. Caldwell one half to trade with them in my absence. "It is not the goods we want", said they, "but if you should be killed, the Chief of the White people will never send another here". I told them that if they did not let me go I would never come to them again. The council broke up and several came back with buffalo robes which I would not trade.

The *Borgne*, who was my landlord, with the greatest chiefs asked me what we did with beaver, and was much surprised that people who possessed every good thing which the mind could imagine, would come so far from their native land for beaver "It is true," said I, "we have many good things, but we have no beaver." After a hearty laugh from the *Borgne* and his smokers, I told them with what contempt the Chief of the White people would look upon me if I did not go to the Shawyens. "Who will tell him," said they, "that the Shawyens have beaver? I replied that he was a man who knew every thing, and that he would be very angry with my father—for so I called the *Borgne*—if he prevented me from going. "If that be the case, my son, you shall have full liberty to go to-morrow morning; but should you be killed, tell your Chief before you go not to blame me."

He then got up with great composure, took his sacred pipe and stem, which he lighted and, after making the four elements smoke, he pointed the stem towards the fort and began haranguing the chief of the white people not to be irritated, telling him how often he had served him and his white people. When done, he said. "Since you say that my comrade, my equal"—

for so he called Mr. Chaboillez—"knows every thing, he must have heard me and must know that my heart is good". Then they began to make conjectures concerning the Chief of the Whites, of his manly strength, of his might and power, of his stature and bulk and, above all, of his dress and weapons. A man who has so much scarlet cloth to give for beaver cannot fail being dressed in scarlet himself. In short, they formed a high idea of his outward appearance which I soon had every reason to regret.

The *Borgne* procured me a young man to assist me on the way and I left the village at dawn to join Rattle Snake and his party. I took three of the Company's horses, one for myself, one to carry the goods and the third for my young man. Going through the villages, I heard everybody calling me a fool; the women were afraid I should never come back. At last, Rattle Snake and twelve young scamps like himself came out of the village and, after having joined ten Shawyens, we started. A party of Mandans having overtaken us, we were now a party of about forty.

Among the Mandans there was a person named Gissom, free-man (1) whom I have had occasion to mention before and who had received credits from the North-West Company. He informed me that he was going to the Shawyans, *en pipe* and he was sure of being better received and get more than by trading the few articles he had, and that, moreover, it was the custom of those Indians who knew nothing about trade. "I suppose", said he, "that you intend to push them a *pipe*?" I told him I knew nothing about *pipes*, and if really they knew nothing about trade I would get a better bargain. "They will laugh

(1) Mr. René Jussomme or Jussiaume had resided in the Missouri country as an independent trader for over fifteen years. He served as guide and interpreter to Mr. David Thompson in his voyage of exploration of 1797.—Lindsey, "A Report on the Boundaries of Ontario."

"at you" was his answer. He told me he intended putting his horse, his gun, a fathom of cloth, 100 balls and powder and a large axe upon his *pipe*.

At night Rattle Snake and his young men became rather anxious and questioned me about what I would do if we were to meet with enemies, or be attacked by the Shawyens; I told them that if we met enemies, I would follow their example, as to the Shawyens there was no danger. "But we have no ammunition, said the chief, will you give us some in case we should see enemies." "By all means," said I, "when I see danger." "You will better give each of us some now" said the chief; I refused. "Well," said he, "you shall turn back to-morrow with some of the others who are going back." I told them that I would not, even were the whole of them to turn back; that I would follow the Shawyens.

They all said the white man was a fool, and became very troublesome, asking for vermillon and tobacco. I, at last, told the chief that he had promised my father, the Borgne, to take care of me and that I did not expect such treatment. This had the desired effect, for they never troubled me again.

On the second day, several of the *Gros Ventres* began to drop behind so that at night only six, with the Chief, remained. We continued our route for four days through extensive plains without meeting with any obstacles and subjected only to a few false alarms. We crossed three large rivers with very strong currents, viz: The Clear Water River, Heart River, *La Rivière aux Boulets*. No wood was to be seen, except a few clusters of poplar here and there along the banks of these rivers.

The country is most plentifully stocked; immense herds of buffaloes could be seen at midday quenching their thirst at these rivers and reposing on their banks. Beavers—which are here in great plenty—reigned undisturbed, for nothing seemed

to make war upon them. Nor were the banks of the rivers confined to the buffaloe alone ; there were numerous flocks of red and fallow deer, the most of which, in the height of the day, were lying on the sides of the hills, while others were on the watch sniffing the fresh breeze while their companions indulged in a watchful slumber. There were also several muddy creeks, with a little water here and there, which the beavers had conserved by stopping the course of the outlets.

The fifth night, being within twelve miles of the Shawyens' camp, there were many preparations to make, more indeed than I think worth while to explain. The Rattle Snake and Mr. Gissom each took their pipe and filled it with all the ceremonies which superstition could invent, then cutting a green branch of choke cherry and passing it through a piece of fat dried meat, they planted it in the ground close to each pipe. This being done, there was a deep silence for some minutes, when Rattle Snake burst out in a kind of lamentation which lasted for a quarter of an hour, and was chorussed at the end by the others in a heavy murmur, as thanksgiving. The Rattle Snake gave his pipe to a lad who sat alongside of him, who, after simulating to make the four elements smoke, without even lighting the pipe, made a very hearty harangue in which he mentioned all the feats the Rattle Snake had accomplished, and implored the pity and assistance of all the living animals, fowls and insects.

All these ceremonies being over and the pipe and green branch carefully put by, Mr. Gissom was desired to go through the same ceremony, but he declined making the lamentation saying that he would act like Father of all the white people,—meaning the King—when he made peace with his children. After making a grim face, he hung down his head in deep meditation ; at this I was obliged to leave the fireside for laughter and did not come back till I heard the hoarse murmur of all the listeners.

When I came back the pipe was in the hand of a Mandan who was questioning Mr. Gissom about his belief. Gissom told him to make the Rising Sun smoke and to implore the pity of a certain Being who can dispose of life according to his will and pleasure, and who was wont to assist every white man in distress ; that he never killed a man ; that his main aim was to do good ; that he lived in fraternal love with every being, whether white people or Indians.

The Mandan, having, as it were, collected the different heads of his belief and actions, commenced a very long harangue almost in the following words :

“ Hoo-ho-hou ! Smoke thou bright son of the East, and thou
“ Great Being who disposeth of the white peoples life at thy
“ pleasure. Do thou not despise me, though I know thee not. I
“ implore not thy assistance for myself but for the aid of one of
“ thy own people whom thou didst assist on former occasions.
“ But should this Being’s power be deficient, I implore all the
“ animals of the Mandans to assist.

“ It is not to aid the warriors I call ye ; no, it is to pity and
“ do charity to a good sort of man who lives like a Mandan, to
“ whom he brings tobacco to smoke, powder, balls, guns, kettles.
“ axes, blankets, cloth and knives to cut our vitals, awls to
“ make our shoes, with every thing else that is good. Hooée !
“ great bull of the meadow, be thou there with thy white cow ;—
“ sagacious wolf, be thou there ;—ye bears and cats, be ye there,—
“ ye eagles and ravens be ye there—ye monsters of the hill, be
“ ye there with your claps of thunder and fire. Thou, great
“ serpent of the bitter sting, be thou there and do not come
“ alone,—but bring all thy slaves to thy aid ”

Thus he continued for a long time, greeting everything that his wild imagination made more frightful than they really were to aid Mr. Gissom in pushing the *pipe* to the Shawyens, and if I have erred in this harangue from the beginning of these cere-

monies, it is by omitting a thousand absurdities which they committed in words and deeds, nor would I have mentioned any of these absurdities which I was so accustomed to hear every day, even by children, were it not to show how soon a civilized being reconciles himself to savage life.....

.....

The next morning, the sixth of our march, two young Shawyens started very early to inform the camp of our approach and we began our slow pace with Rattle Snake and Mr. Gissom, each with his pipe in one hand and the branch of choke cherry, with the fat meat on, in the other, walking before us and singing a lamentable song. The branch and meat were an emblem of peace and plenty, and the pipe, of social union.

Many were the ceremonies which we were obliged to observe ; at length, we saw several horsemen coming full speed before us and who, on coming to the pipe bearers, stopped short. Rattle Snake, followed by Mr. Gissom, with an humble step and down cast eyes went up to them and held them the pipe from which each Shawyen seemed to draw three whiffs, and then claped their hands on their breasts as if saying "it did my heart good".

In this manner they served every one we met with till the Chief arrived with about two hundred horsemen in his suite. The chief was mounted on a milk-white horse and dressed in his war dress and haranguing the Shawyens as he was coming along.

His followers passed on our right hand and came up behind us, when the chief called out to us to make a general halt. He came down from his horse and embraced Rattle Snake, then, stripping himself as naked as he was the day he came to the world, he clothed Rattle Snake with his flashy war dress and, with the assistance of others, mounted him on his white horse. This done, the chief, quite naked, led the horse by the tether to the camp, six miles off, carrying the pipe in his right hand

and the stem pointed towards the camp, singing or lamenting all the way in a language none of us could understand, if there were any thing in it to be understood.

N. B.—Some nation have the custom of carrying the ambassador of a neighbouring nation into their camp on their shoulders, but more frequently on a blanket or a fathom of cloth, and, if they have none, on a buffalo robe between four men.

Mr. Gissom followed them without the least notice being taken of him ; all the others, as well as myself followed behind. I drew the attention of the curious and was surrounded by many old and young who treated me with apparent kindness.

At last we got sight of the camp pitched on an elevated spot on the north bank of a beautiful river. The leather tents, to the number of 220, were pitched in a circle covering a space of six acres. On entering the camp, I was conducted by one of their chiefs to his tent, having been recommended to him by the *Borgne*, through the medium of the other Shawyens. I was actually looked upon as the *Borgne's* son, though they knew I was a white man.

My host, after giving me to eat of the best which his lodge and the camp could afford, made a long harangue commanding those who had furs to come and trade them with the son of the *Gros Ventres* chief, which they readily obeyed, so that before sunset I had not a single article remaining, nor had they any thing to trade except buffaloe skins which, being well garnished, they kept. However, I sold the few articles I had to advantage, having got about a hundred weight of beaver, four of the finest bear skins I ever had seen, with some fine buffaloe robes.

My furs being tied up, I went to see Mr. Gissom and found him very pensive sitting in a lodge and smoking his pipe. I enquired about his success and he told me it was less than he had a right to expect but that I was the cause of it, "for, said he, "they were bringing me furs very fast when you sent a man

“through camp haranguing that you would pay high prices for their beaver, and those who had some in their hands to throw on my pipe turned on their heels and went to you with them and since that time I got only few robes. So,” continued he, “for my gun, cloth, ammunition and horse I got an inferior horse to the one I had given, three beaver skins and six buffaloe robes.” “Had I placed myself in their power as you wished me to have done, I would not have a fourth of what I have at present,” said I, “and I told you all along that you would be the loser.” But he said. “*Il faut faire comme cela pour être considéré par les Sauvages.*”

The *Gros Ventres* were much caressed by the Shawyens and we all agreed to remain six days with them on condition that they would come and camp half way to the Missurie, and that a free intercourse should be between them and the Missurie Indians for the remainder of the season. These six days I past with the greatest pleasure that Savage life could afford.....

..... At length we took our departure accompanied by some of the Shawyens, who were to invite the *Gros Ventres* and the Mandans and especially the *Borgne*, for whom they had the skin of a white buffaloe, which, to a *Gros Ventre*, is too tempting an article to refuse, for when a man has a white buffaloe robe, his fortune is made.

On the third day, we got to the village where I found Mr. Caldwell very anxious for my return. The time fixed for our return having expired, they thought we had been all destroyed. After many councils held, the *Borgne* consented to go to the Shawyens with some of his young men and, if he found that they were not fond of their horses—to use his own expression—that he would send for the *Gros Ventres* to trade horses for European goods.

I gave a few articles to the *Borgne* to trade a horse for me, having already the load of the six horses I brought from the

Fort, besides my expectation that the free-man who was trading at the Pawnees would come and pay his debts. The *Borgne* having left, I prepared for my voyage to the Fort.

Mr. Caldwell and myself were thus occupied on a fine day when, of a sudden, I heard my name called at the door of the lodge by a voice which was familiar, and enquiring if I was within. I hastened to the door, dressed as I was in the Indian costume, and was much surprised at seeing Mr. Charles Chaboillez (1), Mr. Alexander Henry and Mr. Allen Macdonel, accompanied by three men.

Their first salutation was a reproach at my dress, which I found at all time most convenient in an Indian lodge, very light and cool in the warm season. Let any man living with the Indians take the idea of "Savage" from his mind and he will find their dress much more convenient. He can pass through the crowd, day and night, without exciting curiosity or draw a throng of children and barking dogs. It was for this reason that I wore the Indian dress while in their village and with no intent of adopting their manners.

Having announced the eminence of these strangers, the news ran through the village like shot. Many, incited by Indian hospitality, came with the best their humble huts could afford, such as fresh and dried fruit, sweet corn prepared in different manners, green pumpkins and beans, meats green and dried, while others thronged in by mere curiosity to see the North Chiefs of whom they had heard so much, and had formed such romantic ideas, while at a distance. For the sake of Mr. Chaboillez and Mr. Henry's characters I gave a bit of tobacco to those who brought them to eat; though it was less than they expected on that occasion, they said nothing.

The chiefs, who were bolder, began to question me concerning the dignity and influence of these strangers and their motives

(1) The son of Mr. Charles J. Bte Chaboillez. See: "*Esquisse historique*."

for coming to the Missourie. I told them they came to buy horses and were curious to know the country. I endeavoured to force upon them that respect due to such personages by launching out in their praise and eminence, but in vain; the Indians saw nothing in their mien or dress that would command their respect, much less in their liberality.

They were accustomed to see white people who brought them their necessities, but they were accustomed to look upon every white man as an inferior being, therefore, those traders whom they had seen formerly, myself included, used to extort respect from them by threats to which they submitted for fear of offending the Chief of the Whites.

The *Gros Ventres* had heard from tradition of some Indians who had been at the Spanish settlements in former times and who had been admitted in the presence of the Governor. Being in a shining dress, surrounded by attendants and guards, he had made such an impression on their minds, that those who heard the tradition, formed the same idea of our chiefs or Proprietors in the North. They, indeed, could scarcely believe Messrs. Chaboillez and Henry to be those whom we called our Chiefs, for, had they been Chiefs, they would at least have brought a pipe of tobacco to give to an Indian.

They asked me who made them chiefs? were they warriors? what made them superior to other white men? I told them that they were chiefs by the multiplicity of their riches, and superior to others by the many charities they made to Indians of the North; but the more I said in their praise, the more contempt I brought upon myself, and if ever I regretted any thing in my life it was for having said too much.....

On the other hand Messrs. Chaboillez and Henry were much disappointed; they had promised themselves a pleasant voyage, they had a long and disagreeable one. They were accustomed with Indians who paid them due respect: the name of a Pro-

priotor went a great way among the northern tribes, but that name was not known at the Missurie.

Men of dignity must deck themselves better than the common voyageur if they wish to be considered as they should be. As the Indians have no idea of mental abilities, there must be some thing in the outward appearance to attract notice and command respect. M. Chaboillez had on a *capot* which had been once white, a good leather *Brix* (?) and a weather beaten hat, with a stout black beard of nine days' growth. Mr Henry only differed in the *capot*, as he had a corderoy jacket !..... To say the least, their appearance was not to their credit, nor to the interest of the Company. It was most galling to me, who understood some of the Indian language, to hear them despised and the American captains, whom they hated till then, praised.....

.....
They had come to purchase horses, but found none to their taste..... Mr. Henry avowed his disappointment and did not disguise his detestation of the Indians ; he was displeased with himself, dissatisfied with his "equal" and disgusted with his inferiors..... Mr. Chaboillez, on the contrary, was as much at his ease as if he were in his own house ; every thing pleased him ; he sat in the throng, smoked the pipe when it came to his turn with as much ease as if he were bred a *Gros Ventre*, but Mr. Henry kept at a distance from the crowd and smoked his pipe alone.....

.....
..... About midday, the *Borgne's* brother and some more of the *Gros Ventres* came back from the Shawyens to tell the Missurie Indians that the *Borgne* was wanting them all to go to the Shawyens. This news soon got known through the different villages and all the men and women began to make preparation to repair thither next morning.....

So many Indians could not be expected to be ready all at the same time; we were obliged to wait for them on the hills. At length, being all collected on the same hill; we were about 900 persons including men, women and children and as many horses, some loaded with corn and other produce of the Missurie, and also with European articles of traffic.

The Indians were dressed in their best, and marched out with flying colours and singing Indian songs. There was much in this procession that would give to a traveller a higher idea of Indian taste than is generally imparted by those who travel among them. Notwithstanding his prejudice against the Missurie Indians, Mr. Henry could not but say that there was nothing grander to be seen in this country, and, had he not seen it himself, he would not have believed that Indians had any notion of such regular marching and forming files and figures.

The men were separated from the women and children and formed in squares of sixty four; there were eleven of these squares, making the number of warriors about seven hundred, so that about three hundred were missing, the Americans having found their total number to be a little over one thousand men able to carry arms—*Gros Ventres* and *Mandans* included

We continued our march all day in the above manner, the men at the head, at a slow trot, while the women, children and baggage jogged on behind. Their order of march, their weapons which consisted of bow and arrows, lances, battle axes, shields, would have reminded one of old times, when our forefathers made war. At night, we all encamped on a level plain, where there was hardly a drop of water to be found.

Next morning, we continued our march in the same regular order, but more gaudy with paint and feathers, as we approached our destination. The Shawyens came to meet us in separate parties till the whole of the nation had joined our procession now composed of over two thousand horsemen.....

..... We arrived at the Shawyén camp a little before sunset and were all received with cordial amity. We accompanied the *Borgne's* brother to the *Borgne's* tent; the latter, being informed of the dignity of the strangers, received them with tokens of greater respect than the rest of the *Gros Ventres* had done, then asked leave to go and recommend good amity toward the nations; that they should not steal, nor quarrel with one another, but be as firm in their friendship as one nation.

Having mounted his famous horse, he passed like lightening through the middle of the camp, which was as thronged with people and horses as a market place, haranguing them in friendly terms, to have a good understanding among themselves. When he came down from his horse at the door of the lodge, he put the bridle of his horse in Mr. Chaboillez's hand. Mr. Chaboillez, sensible of the *Borgne's* generosity, gave him his bundle of goods untied.

The *Borgne* appeared much satisfied with the goods though I knew that, at another time, he would not have been satisfied with double their value. To show his importance to the Shawyens, he launched on the many tokens of respect conferred on him by the white people, and that these chiefs came from the Red River purposely to see him, and that he was sorry he had not a good horse to give to each.

Mr. Henry despairing to find to his taste, I enquired of the *Borgne* if he could not possibly procure him one. "My son," said he, to-morrow I am to adopt one of the Shawyens for my son, and am to offer them a "pipe" on which the *Gros Ventres* will put all their goods and the Shawyens their horses. According to our manner of trade we ought to expect at least two hundred horses as we have that number of guns, besides other articles, to put on the *Pipe*. Out of that number you can

"choose out a horse for yourself, you shall have the first
"choice.".....

.....

A short while after sunset, a horrid uproar arose throughout the whole camp and we saw crowds running up a hill where more than half the two nations were already gathered, who by their cries and movements seemed in open quarrel. As every body went, we followed and found that it was occasioned by the three Assiniboines who, having arrived at the Missurie after our departure, had followed our track.

The Assiniboines and the Shawyens being on unfriendly terms, the latter wished to put them to death, but the *Gros Ventres* and Mandans, whose protection the Assiniboines relied upon and implored, would not allow the Shawyens to destroy them, unless they wished to violate the pledge of faith between the two nations. The many threats on both side nearly brought them to immediate hostility, but the *Gros Ventres* and Mandans having surrounded the prisoners on all sides brought them safe to the center of the camp.

The Shawyens were enraged to see themselves deprived of their prey by those whom they considered in their heart as their bitter enemies; many were the attempts made to break through their ranks with naked arms in order to kill the Assiniboines, who walked in the middle, singing their death song and awaiting their fate. But the *Borgne* was there, walking around the prisoners, brandishing his battle axe in the air, and threatening immediate revenge on the first who would touch them, but, at the same time, using all his eloquence to pacify both nations. The sound of the *Borgne's* voice was law to his own nation and struck terror with the Shawyens, and at last, put an end to the contest, Mr. Henry himself, who disliked these Indians, admitted that he had an heroical aspect.

The Assiniboines being now in the middle of the camp, and it being a rule with some Indians not to shed an enemy's blood within the limits of their huts or camp, they were safe. A party of Scioux who happened to be with the Shawyens at the time, took them under their protection for the night, and every body returned home, but with a different countenance they had before. Confidence was gone on both sides and suspicion, anxiety and hatred had taken its place. Some of them, indeed, made many efforts to raise the cloud from off their countenance by various topics, but the bane of revenge once planted in the Savage's heart was not to be removed by forced smiles. We went to rest, but could not sleep with the noise in the camp, the *Gros Ventres*, suspecting treachery, did not go to rest, but kept a watch over the actions of the Shawyens, all night.

Mr. Henry and I went in the morning to look for the owner of a beautiful speckled horse which we were bargaining the night before, but that noble animal attracted the notice, if not the envy, of all the *Gros Ventres*; we, however, got the owner to come and see the goods. He was rather taken up with their quantity and quality, but gave us to understand that he would see the result of the day and the decision of the nations about the *Pipe*.

Harangue succeeded harangue to get the women to make a long *shade* of leather lodges for the reception of the *pipe* and the dancers, but none seemed in a hurry to execute their orders till it was late in the day.

A certain number of respectable men were selected on both sides to execute the ceremonies of the *Pipe* and adopted son. Those on the intended son's side sent him naked and crying to the *Borgne*, who received him with the tenderness of a real father and had him clothed in the finest and most gaudy dress. He was led with great ceremonies to the shade which was

strewed with flowers and weeds, bulls' horns, human skulls, bone and scalps.

The young man began to dance *Le Grand Calumet* and some of the *Gros Ventres* came with small articles of trade and laid them down, the Shawyens brought a few lean and old horses, but the former misunderstanding between the nations caused every thing to come but slowly.

The selected made themselves hoarse haranguing their respective nation, but in vain; nothing coming. The *Gros Ventres* represented to the *Borgne* that if they were to give their guns and ammunitions away to the Shawyens and render them defenceless, that the Shawyens would immediately fall upon them with their arms and ammunition.

"Shall those horses," said they, "that we are to get in exchange defend us or carry us home in safety? and if they did, must we abandon our women and children who are here exposed to the treachery of a perfidious nation? Did not the Shawyens destroy twelve of the Rocky Mountain Indians who went to treat for peace with them no later than last spring and do they not wish to do the same with us if we are foolish enough to disarm ourselves and put ourselves in their power?"

"Have we not horses as well as they and we have ammunition and guns more than they have? then let us keep that superiority to ourselves, and if the Shawyens wish for our friendship let them keep their horses and be friends; but if on the contrary, let us show once more that we are men and that none but women can be terrified with threats".

Thus and more than this said the representative of the *Gros Ventres* in the full hearing of the Shawyens, but while he was yet speaking the cry of war was heard in every quarter of the camp. The shade, in an instant, was pulled down about the ears of those who were under it, and the adopted son threw his fine clothing to the *Borgne* and ran to his lodge. Nothing was

more horrid than the cries of those savages ready to destroy one another. All were running to the field for their horses : Shawyens, *Gros Ventres*, Mandans and we, white men, among the rest.

We soon got on horseback and, passing through the camp, we met with the owner of the speckled horse and having asked if he would now sell his horse, he shook his head several times with rage in his countenance, and with the back of his hand he made signs to us to be off as it were to say : " be off in time, ere worse may befall you ".

.....

The *Gros Ventres* and Mandans having collected on an eminence or rising ground above the camp, we all made a halt, and while we were preparing for the worse, the *Borgne*, who was on foot, came to Mr. Chaboillez saying : " My equal, lend me your horse " that I may go and speak to those dogs and know whether they " prefer peace to war ". Mr. Chaboillez did not relish the idea of parting with a famous runner at this time, but the *Borgne* pressed him in a commanding voice to obey. While Mr. Chaboillez was taking the saddle off the horse, I asked the *Borgne* if they were to fight. " My son ", said he, " we have too many " children and women here to commence hostilities ourselves, " but, if we are attacked, we must not flinch ".

The *Borgne* soon passed through the crowd inviting all those who had breech clouts to follow him ; the other chiefs harangued with threatening voice the throng which was now gathered on the brow of the hill in front of the Shawyens' camp, of which no vestiges were now seen, for, on the cry of war, the women pulled down the lodges and huddled their alls on the horses and dogs and went off with speed. The Shawyens were all under arms at the distance of a parley from us. The *Borgne* then spoke to them :

" I thought, Shawyens ", said he, " that I made myself known to you several times before, and yet you treat me with contempt. You invited me to come to see you in peace, I obeyed you with an open heart and brought peace along with me ; but you allow me to go home on foot, with a heart full of anger. But I speak to you now not to reproach you or to praise myself, but to get your answer whether you prefer war to peace : Speak ! "

When the *Borgne* ceased to speak the Shawyens said ; " We know you very well, and we did not invite you to our land to make war upon you. The most of the present discord has begun among ourselves ; when that discord is adjusted you will hear our decisive answer ; therefore, go home in peace, take your time and fear not ". The two nations turned their back or wheeled about and thus ended the memorable fright we gained by following the *Gros Ventres* to the Shawyens, and thus ended a discord which at first seemed serious, but the nations being afraid of each other, the question was, which of the two would run off first and with honor.

Having advanced towards home about two leagues, we all encamped on a small rivulet and the *Borgne*, not being pleased with the answer he received from the Shawyens, determined not to go further until he got a more satisfactory one ; therefore he sent three young men to them in the night, who returned before, day with a promise that the Shawyens would come to trade to the *Gros Ventres* village when the corn would be ripe.

We started early from this campment as we intended to get to the Missurie that night. After a disagreeable voyage of four days, we arrived at the villages, where I found a freeman who came up from the Pawnees, and who informed me that the freeman who had taken debts from the North-West Company had been taken prisoner by the Scioux &c., &c.

I did not wish to leave the Missurie so soon, but Messrs. Cha-boillez and Henry pressed me so that I left, after having disposed of the rest of my goods for some beaver brought me by some Rocky Mountain Indians during the night. Next morning, I crossed the Missurie with six horses well loaded and two light to carry myself and Mr. Caldwell. I was not a little proud when I considered that I was the first North trader who crossed the Missurie with four packs of beaver.....

.....

LISTE ⁽¹⁾ des " bourgeois, " commis, engagés, et
" voyageurs " de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest,
après la fusion de 1804.

BOURGEOIS

Sir A. Mackenzie	John Gregory
Wm McGillivray	Duncan McGillivray
Wm Hallowell	Roderic McKenzie
Thomas Forsyth	John Richardson
John Forsyth	John Ogilvie
James Forsyth	John Inglis
John Mure	Alex. Ellice
P. de Rocheblave	Alex. McKenzie
John Macdonald	James Leith
John Willis	John Haldane
Angus Shaw	Daniel McKenzie
Wm MacKay	John McDonald
Donald McTavish	John MacDonnell
A. N. McLeod	Alex. MacDougal
Charles Chaboillez	Peter Grant
John Sayers	Alex. Fraser
Aeneas Cameron	John Finlay
Duncan Cameron	James Hughes

(1) Cette liste est incomplète ; elle ne comprend pas les noms des commis, engagés et " voyageurs " des postes du Roi, du Grand Lac des Esclaves, de la Rivière MacKenzie et des Montagnes Rocheuses.

Alex. McKay	Hugh McGillis
Alex. Henry, jnr.	John McGillivray
James McKenzie	Simon Fraser
J. Duncan Campbell	David Thompson
John Thompson	

DÉPARTEMENT DE LA RIVIÈRE ATHABASCA

François Decoigne,	commis
Jasper Haws,	"
Joseph Roy, dit Charou,	contremaître
Simon Allen, un Iroquois,	"
Joseph Ménard, de Montreal,	"

VOYAGEURS

Louis Lapierre	J.-Bte Deschamps
Basile Deschatlin	Jacques Goulet
Etienne Lambert	Nicolas Paul
François Lemire	Jos : — dit Francœur
Joseph Rhéaume	Jacques L'Hirondelle
J.-B. Suliere	Ant : Vandal
François Boucher	Michel Labatte
J.-B. Vertefeuille	Michel Klein
Jos. Bonaventure	Joseph Hétu
Sansquartier	Pierre Guimond
Pierre Lemay dit Delorme	
Paul Cheney-echoe, un Iroquois	
Ignace Nowaniouter,	"
André Roussin, dit Bellefleur	
Jacques Quiter Tisato, Mohawk	
Hippolyte St-Jacou, dit Mary	

FORT DES PRAIRIES

Nicolas Montour,	Commis
John Rowand,	"
Jacques Raphael,	"
Wm H. Hamilton,	"
J. M. Quesnel,	"
MacMillan,	"
François Deneau	Interprète
Louis Laliberté,	"
P. Gérôme,	"
Frs Deschamps,	"
Jos. Cardinal,	"
Aug. Lionais,	"
P. Dénommé,	"
J. B. Letendre,	"
Rocque,	"
Jos. Primeau,	"
Louis Durand	Guide
Louis Blondeau,	"

VOYAGEURS,—CONTRE-MAÎTRES

Jos. Goudrie	J.-B. Dubois
J.-B. Laurent	J.-B. Beauchamps
J.-B. Larocque	Jos. Daniel
J.-B. Dumont	Chs Lagacé
J.-B. Turcot	Augustin Vallé
F. Lussier	Joseph Constant
André Carrière	Louis Bélanger
Jos. Ducette	

VOYAGEURS

Jos. Baribeau	Frs Méthot
Chs Crevier	Jos. Dubois
Jean Nicolas Caron	Pierre Vien
Louis Calihue	Jos. Ritchot
Jos. Ladouceur	Réné Beauvais
Ant. Dunord	Alexis Daoust
Louis Duaimé	Ant. Lavallée
Joseph Gagnon	Prince Valade
Jos. Lafournaise	Etienne Forcin
Thomas Pérain	Ign. Salihony
Ant. Clément	Jacques Bryce
Chs Gilbert	Chs Loyer
Pierre Laliberté	J.-B. Robillard
Baptiste Martel	Frs Dupré
Louis Lemire	Richard Daigneau
Baptiste Boisvert	Et. Morin
Pierre Daniel	Augustin Vallé
Jos Stacey	P. Cawandawa
Jos Durand	Chs Boucher
Augt. Languedoc	Chs Fontaine
Baptiste Parisien	Jos. Albert
Basile Thifault	Jos. Carrière
Frs Robert	Louis Jobin
Am. Duplessis	Louis Lapierre
Jos Lussier	Louis Gibeau
B. Dupuis	Denis Nadeau
Jos. Primeau	J.-B. Massicotte
Boucher	Ign. Fournier
Jos. Quintal	Bourdon

Pierre Coulombe	Jos. Chenette
Bercier	Paul Durand
Ant. Genou	Bercier
Macaron	Jos. Parenteau
Jos. Troye	Jos. Labombarde
Jos. Lafond	Ls Groult
S. Cardinal	Beauregard
J. B. Massicotte	Ls Mousseau
Baptiste Daoust	Ls-Augt. Plante
Timothée Dionne	Ant. Lamarre
Frs Deschamps	Jos. Craite
Thomas Young	Bonav. Parisien
Jos. Tourelle	M. Boulard
P. Gratton	Auguste Lacombe
Ls Dubeau	Am. Beaudoin
Frs Marcotte	Pierre Duchène
Jos. Riquerin dit Laverdure	Gareau
P. Montreuil, chasseur libre	

RIVIÈRE AUX ANGLAIS

Frobisher	commis
Robert Steawrs	"
Colin Robertson	"
Joseph Larocque	"
John Forbes	" et interprète
Duncan Campbell	" "
Stephen Brunwin	" "
Antoine Paget	" "
Robert Henry	" "

INTERPRÈTES

Louis Versailles	Pierre Bruce
Frs Larivière	J. B. Lavallée, sen
J. B. Larocque	M. Descotteaux
Ls Gibotte	

GUIDES

Joseph Paul

Chs Leclerc

VOYAGEURS—CONTRE—MAITRES

André Bélanger

J.-B. Lemay

Ls Grondin

J.-B. Rivard

Bastien Paquet

J.-B. Lavallée, jur

Laurent Cadotte

Ign. Lavallée

Hippolyte Dazé

VOYAGEURS

Jos. Galipeau

Ant. Bouchard

Ant. Quintal

Ls Drouin

Amable Turgeau

Ls Noël

Frs Marseille

Michel Normand

Frs Lagrave

Siméon Ladouceur

Jos. Flamand

J.-B. Beauchemin

Pierre Plante

Ant. Bruveau

Pierre Campeau

Pierre Groteau

Pierre Delord

Jos. St Martin

Chs Lachance

Toussaint Caillé

Augustin Poirier

J.-B. Latourelle

Frs Robichoux

Frs Boucher

Jacq. Labatte

Baptiste Bélair

James England

J.-B. Cusson

Paulet Paul

Gabriel Caisse

Frs Desrosiers

Ant. Denault

J.-B. Bouvier

Hya. Moreau

M. Cartier

J.-B. Guy

Jos. Gibeau

J.-B. Girard

Ant. Baillargeon

Frs. Raymond

Jos. Papin

James Pearson

Frs Dupré

Etienne Barbu

Jos. Laverdure

Jos. Laplante

Frs Bélanger, traiteur libre

LE BAS DE LA RIVIERE ROUGE

Chs Hesse	Commis
Michel Colletterie	"
Louis Dorion	"
Ant. Desjarlais	" et interprète
Jos. St. Germain.	" "
Augustin Cadotte	" "
William Henry	"
John Crébassa	"
Alexander Wilkie	"
Toussaint Lesieur	"
Pierre Bonza	Interprète

GUIDES

Toussaint Vaudry	J. B. Robillard, (Lambert)
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VOYAG. URS—CONTRE-MAITRES

Jos. Beaulieu	Chs Bottureau
Ls Bourdon	André Beauchemin
Augustin Boisvert	J.-B. Desmarais

VOYAGEURS

Michel Bourassa	Antoine Lapointe
Jos. Bourret	Ambroise Allard
J.-B. Larocque	Michel Jasmin
Frs Hamel	Alexis Mandeville
J.-B. Bellecque	Frs Dubord
Nicolas Pouliot	Jérémie Martin

Angus Macdonald	Pierre Martin
Michel Chamard	Ant. Bercier
J.-B. St-Pierre	Jos. Hamel
Ant. Larocque	J.-B. Davies
Jos. Dénommé	Jos. Rainville
Joseph Sire (Cyr ou Seers)	J.-B. Bertrand
Jos. Nentaine (Nantel ?)	J.-B. Lorrain
Belcourt	Masson
Mélançon	Parent
Larocque	

HAUT DE LA RIVIÈRE ROUGE

Frs Ant. Larocque	commis
Pierre Falcon	"
Donald Chisholm	"
Hugh Heney	"
James Caldwell	"
Chs McKenzie	"
François Capois	"
André Poitras	"

INTERPRÈTES

Antoine Capois	Pierre Saucie
J.-B. Lafrance	Frs Desmarais
Paul Jéboint	

GUIDES

Joseph Azure	Jos. Brisebois
J.-B. Sansregret	

VOYAGEURS—CONTRE-MAÎTRES

Frs St-Denis	Ant. Fontaine
Frs Morin	Simon McKay
Eustache Caron	Michel Patenaude
Joachim Donville	Jos. Fournier
J.-B. Mariolet	

VOYAGEURS

Ant. Gonneville	Ant. Desbarats
Jos. Pichet	Ant. Basinet
Jos. Joyalle	Thierny Godin
Frs. Jollet	J.-B. Chaurette
Frs. Lacouture	Ls Landrie
Simon Desorcie	Frs Cantard
Frs Giasson	Ant. Azure
Michel Lochart	Ant. Lisey
Jos. Aumier	J. B. Gervais
Frs. Dagenais	Ant. Brière
Frs. Langie	J.-B. Gobin
J.-B. Gervais	Ls Pichet
Ls Ethier	Ls Brunell
Pierre Lefebvre	J.-B. Mercier.
Augustin Gonneville	Jos. Paget
Frs. Richard	Frs Larivière
Simon Bellehumeur	Pierre Ducharme
Louis St Pierre	George Gadourie
Wm Morrison	Michel Chalifoux
Jos. Bercier	J.-B. Mini, (Dumesnil ?)
J.-B. Bonneau	Alexis Gervais
Alph. Goulet	Jos. Caplette
Pascal Daoust	Paul Bibeau
Jos. Moriveau	Lafontaine
Comptois	J.-B. Jobin
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 “ “

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commis
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 Jos. Labombarde
 Magnus Ganac
 Jos. Fournier

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