

EARLY CIVIL HISTORY OF RED RIVER.

IN virtue of a charter granted in the year 1870 by King Charles the Second, the Hudson's Bay Company was incorporated and endowed with certain rights and privileges. This charter has been much before the public both of England and America, and considerable doubt has been expressed by the press as to whether any, and, if any, what rights could be claimed under its provisions. It has also been laid before a long succession of eminent lawyers, with the object of discovering what good grounds the public might have to support the opinion that it should be held invalid. Some of these gentlemen, among whom were Mansfield, Erskine, Romilly, Scarlett, Bothell, and many others, have doubted whether King Charles had the power to confer a right of exclusive trade upon any company, but all agree that, under the charter, the right to the possession of the land within the limits therein specified, could be, and was, conferred on the Hudson's Bay Company. The territory, described as Rupert's Land, consists of the whole region whose waters flow into Hudson's Bay. It extends back from the Bay, in its narrowest width, on the east main coast, about 200 miles, on the south about 300 miles towards Canada, while it attains its greatest breadth of more than 1200 miles on the western shore of the Bay, whence the belt stretches back towards the Rocky Mountains, including within its limits the fertile valley of the Saskatchewan, whose waters fall into Lake Winnipeg, from which, through an outlet at its north-eastern extremity, they pass into streams emptying themselves into Hudson's Bay. The operations of the company, as a trading corporation, extend over vast regions other than those included in the ring above traced, but its proprietary rights and governing responsibilities under the charter are confined within the limits described. Until about 1774, being more than a century after the date of the charter, the company does not appear to have extended its operations very far beyond the sea coast, the country west of which was a wilderness inhabited only by wild beasts and tribes of wandering savages.

The project of colonization, in any part of the territory, was first attempted by Thomas Douglas, Earl of Selkirk, about the year 1811. At this time Red River was the headquarters of an inland trading district perfectly isolated from the rest of the world, and one of the principal scenes of contention between the Hudson's Bay Company's agents and those of the two rival Canadian fur companies, called "the North West" and "the X. Y." companies, between whom the feeling of rivalry ran so strong as to lead to occasional scenes of bloodshed and frequent scuffles of minor importance. In the last and most serious of these engagements, which took place in 1816, Governor Semple, the chief magistrate, was shot.

This deplorable condition of things is not to be ascribed to any sudden outbreak or mismanagement on the part of any of the agents concerned, but was brought about by a series of events extending over a period of years. In 1763 Canada was ceded by the French to the English, under the Treaty of Paris. As early as 1640, French colonists, whose spirit of adventure, stimulated by the desire of gain, and love for the free, roving Indian life, had led them to pursue the calling of the trapper, betook themselves to the woods and hunting grounds of Canada, and spread gradually over the whole country east from the height of land west of Lake Superior. These were termed *coureurs des bois*, and, as hunters and trappers, they were ever more skillful than their Indian teachers. As traders, they were outfitted by Canadian merchants with necessary goods to barter with the Indians for furs, and, after periods of absence extending over twelve or fifteen months, spent in travelling in their canoes, would return laden with furs of great value, their share of which they regularly squandered during a short residence in the city previous to embarking on their next voyage. In 1731, a Lower Canadian seigneur, named M. Varennes de la Verandrye, acting under a license to trade, granted by the Canadian Government, was the first white man to cross the height of land above mentioned in the first of two expeditions which he made as far as the Rocky Mountains. On the first he went down the Winnipeg River to the borders of Lake Winnipeg, and penetrated up the Red River and Assiniboine to the prairie lands of the far West, locally known at present by the names of the Districts of Swan River and the Saskatchewan. On his second expedition, M. de la Verandrye penetrated up the river Saskatchewan. His example was followed by many others, and, as the trade turned out profitable, considerable quantities of goods were forwarded from the Canadian settlements for barter with the Indians, the *coureurs des bois* acting as agents in the exchange.

About 1774, in consequence of the success of these traders, in pursuit of their policy of intercepting the Indians on their way from their hunting grounds in the interior to trade their furs with the agents of the Hudson's Bay Company at their factories, which, as above-mentioned, had before that time been erected only in the vicinity of the coast, the company was forced to protect its interests by establishing posts inland on the ground, which, under their charter, had been conveyed to them, but on

which their opponents had, until then, carried on their operations comparatively undisturbed.

Far from being seriously damaged for some years, the Canadian traders continued to be so successful that wealthy men embarked capital in the trade, and, about the year 1783, the opposition to the company had resolved itself into one other great combination called the "North West Company of Montreal." This association of merchants was peculiarly a Canadian institution, having its chief seat of operations at Montreal, in opposition to the Hudson's Bay Company, which was an English concern, with its headquarters in London. The chief operations of the Hudson's Bay Company were on the Bay itself; but, although the North Westers also traded on the Bay, their main efforts were concentrated on the plain country towards the West, and they gradually forced themselves, by Lake Superior and Red River, across the continent to the Pacific coast. They are said to have employed about 5000 men altogether in their service about this time.

Discord appears, however, to have existed in the North West camp, for we read of a division of interest therein, and the foundation of another association called the "X. Y. Company," which opposed both the Hudson's Bay and the North West. The X. Y. continued to be, like the North West, a distinctively Canadian corporation. Matters between all these contending parties began to wear a formidable appearance. Hostilities broke out between the agents of the respective companies, and alliances were formed between the Indians and the whites connected with either party, while the whole trade was carried on in a reckless, extravagant manner.

In the year 1811, the Earl of Selkirk purchased from the Hudson's Bay Company the ownership of a vast tract of land, including, as a small part of the whole, the ground occupied at the present time by Red River Settlement. The sum paid in exchange for this grant I do not know. The rights granted to Lord Selkirk were full proprietary rights to the soil, subject only to the burden of extinguishing the Indian titles. Till that date the question of these claims had lain between the Indians and the Company; the burden of their extinction lay thenceforward on Lord Selkirk.

About this time a compulsory exodus of the inhabitants of the mountainous regions in the county of Sutherland was in progress. The history of the expulsion of a vast number of the poorer tenantry from the estates of the Duchess of Sutherland, on which they and their ancestors had vegetated in much idleness, semi-barbarism and contentment, from a traditional era, to make way for the working of the sterner realities of the system of land management which prevails on great estates in the prosaic nineteenth century, is to this day fresh in the recollection of the remaining population of the extreme north of Scotland. The pain with which the homeless exiles saw the roofs which had sheltered them through life, removed from the bare walls of their deserted habitations by the merciless edict of irresistible power, has been retained in the memory of the peasants of the north, and, doubtless, the adventures of many of the expatriated ones, after their entrance on the untried vicissitudes of life in other lands, are known and held in interest by the children of their kindred in the country whence they came.

Few, probably, of the wanderers found so remote and sequestered a home as did those of their number whom the Earl of Selkirk took under his protection, and forwarded to settle on the estate he had purchased at Red River. Few, also, it is to be hoped, met with more serious obstacles to be surmounted in their dealings with nature and with men than the same hapless party. It must, however, be stated that they emigrated ostensibly of their free wills, Lord Selkirk having visited their parish of Kildman and laid such inducements before them as led them to close with his terms, nor was it until after the last of them had departed that the forcible expulsions were commenced. They arrived on the Bay coast in the autumn of 1811, and spent the winter of that year amid cold of Arctic intensity and many privations at Churchill, on the western shore of Hudson's Bay. On the outbreak of spring in 1812 they advanced inland, crossed Lake Winnipeg, and ascended the Red River of the North which empties itself into Winnipeg on its southern shore. At the confluence of the Assiniboine and Red Rivers, about forty miles from the lake, they found themselves—metaphorically speaking—at home. They were in the centre of the American continent, 1500 or 1600 miles in direct distance from the nearest city residence of civilized man in America, and separated from the country whence they came by an impassable barrier.

There being no possibility of retreat it remained only to make the best of their position in the land of their adoption. Here, however, they found new food for anxiety. The X. Y. and the North West companies regarded them as invaders whose presence was detrimental to their interests and as *protoges* of their opponents Lord Selkirk and the Hudson's Bay Company. The Indians also objected to the cultivation of their hunting grounds, and were instigated to hostile proceedings against the new comers by the representatives of the Canadian companies. The year 1812 passed without any satisfactory progress being made by the unfortunate people who spent the

following winter in great misery at Pembina, near the United States frontier, whither they were driven by compulsion of the Indians.

They appear, however, to have found means before spring to mollify their opponents to such an extent as permitted their return to build log houses and cultivate the lands on the borders of Red River. After having been left to enjoy a term of peace which lasted about a year, the colonists were attacked by their persevering enemies, who, professing their determination to exterminate the society, reduced the huts they had built to cinders, killing some of the inhabitants in the process. Re-inforced by a company of additional immigrants from Scotland the settlers returned to the spots whence they had been driven, and recommenced their labours in defiance of all the discouragements they had encountered.

The foundation of this colony, if it had any effect at all on the relations between the agents of the rival trading companies, served only to exasperate their mutual enmity. Matters between them became steadily worse and worse—property was destroyed, establishments attacked, men captured and others killed. Acting as the representatives of the power in whose hands the government of the country had been vested, Governors MacDonnell and Semple successively issued proclamations and fought bravely in the defence of the interests entrusted to their keeping for a long time. At length, on the 19th of June, 1816, the adherents of the two parties met under such circumstances that a skirmish occurred, in the course of which about twenty men, among whom was Governor Semple himself, lost their lives at a place now called Seven Oaks, situated in the heart of the colony.

Anxious about the fate of the people who had gone to Red River under his auspices, and deeply concerned personally as a land owner in the important events transpiring on the scene of these belligerent operations, Lord Selkirk left England with the view of visiting Red River, and personally inspecting the business there. In passing through Canada, being advised by dispatches sent him of the outrages at Seven Oaks, he applied to the commanding general of the forces in that colony for a body guard to protect him from assassination in his journey through the interior. He received for that purpose a detachment of two sergeants and twelve private soldiers belonging to a corps called the regiment De Meuron. On his own personal responsibility he raised an additional force recruited from disbanded soldiers formerly connected with the same regiment in Canada, and proceeded to Red River. On his way, and after his arrival at that place, he attacked and took possession of all the forts of the North West Company lying on his route, and made its agents his prisoners. Some of those who had been concerned in the Seven Oaks affair were sent to Canada to stand their trial as murderers, some as principals, others as accessories. There were also charges of arson, robbery of cannon and other "high misdemeanours." The trials of the accused took place at Toronto, in virtue of a Commission from Lower Canada granted under the Canada Jurisdiction Act. They resulted in an acquittal of all the prisoners on all the charges.

Lord Selkirk was himself, some years subsequently, sued for damages grounded on the action he had taken during his expedition to Red River, and judgments adverse to him were obtained in the Canadian courts involving vast sums.

A very important element in the business which took his Lordship to Red River in 1817, was the proposed extinction of the Indian titles on that part of his property intended for immediate occupation. What these Indian titles are is a question on which great latitude of opinion prevails among different people.

The Earl of Selkirk arrived with his system of operations arranged on a plan drawn up under reliable legal advice obtained in England. On seeking for men in authority among the Indians, some difficulty was at first found in getting any recognized chiefs, possessed of right to enter as principals on such a negotiation. The ground in question was held to belong to the Chippeway or Saulteux, and the Killistine or Cree Nation. These barbarous tribes wandered over a wide extent of country, hunting and passing their time like any other brotherhood of savages. It was a difficult matter to find any single individual whose authority was considered binding by the rest. Five different chiefs were, however, at length selected, whose right to treat was established to the satisfaction of both sides, and on the 18th of July, 1817, a treaty was duly signed by the Earl on one side, and these dusky wanderers on the other, whereby the latter made over to King George III., for the benefit of the Earl of Selkirk, their rights in a long strip of country, extending along each bank of the Red River and Assiniboine. The land ceded was to extend two miles back on either side from the river as a centre line, along that part of the Red River beginning from its mouth at Lake Winnipeg, and extending to its confluence with Red Lake River in the United States, and along the Assiniboine from its junction with the Red River, where Fort Garry now stands, to Muskrat River. The portion of land thus indicated between Pembina and Red

Lake River, on which, in virtue of the treaty, the Indian titles were extinguished, as well as the larger portion of ground previously granted to his Lordship by the Hudson's Bay Company, being in the territory of the United States, gave rise long afterwards to a claim for compensation brought by the Earl's representatives against the American government. In addition to the strips of ground just described, two circles, each of six miles radius, were ceded around Fort Douglas, (near Fort Garry) and Fort Darr (Pembina) as centres. The idea of a distance of two miles, which forms so important an element in this bargain, was conveyed to the Indian comprehension by describing it as the greatest distance at which a horse on the level prairie could be distinctly seen, or daylight seen under his belly between his legs. The Earl of Selkirk was known among the Indians as the "Silver Chief." The instrument executed conveyed the lands in the first instance to the king, because the extinction of Indian titles in favor of private parties is legally a nullity, and the Earl came out invested with special powers to conclude the treaty conferred on him by the Imperial Government.

The consideration on account of which the land was ceded was an annual payment of two hundred pounds weight of tobacco, of which one half was to be paid the Saulteux chiefs at Fort Garry, and the other to the Cree chiefs at Portage LaPrairie, or, as it is called by the English, the Prairie Portage, a point on the Assiniboine about 70 miles above Fort Garry. Each payment was to take place on the 10th October.

The important document, of which the foregoing is the scope, was signed by Lord Selkirk and five Indian chiefs as principals, and seven officers connected with the service as witnesses. The chiefs signed by appending their distinctive marks on the representations of wild animals by which they were respectively known.

So wretched had the general condition of the territory become, in consequence of the deplorable events above narrated, that the government of Canada interfered, with a view to attempt a reconciliation between the conflicting parties. A gentleman named Coltman was appointed commissioner to ascertain the causes and extent of the disturbances. He recommended, as the only feasible remedy, that an effort should be made by the Government to bring the traders to an amicable settlement and union of interests; but for some considerable time, no action was taken on his recommendation by his employers, while the unfortunate companies through their protracted exertions were reduced to the verge of bankruptcy. Lord Selkirk died in 1821, and after that date the late Right Hon. Edward Ellice became the most prominent person round whom the current of events runs. This gentleman, then one of the principal stockholders of the North West Company, was consulted by Government, and, under its auspices, instituted negotiations which, after many difficulties had been surmounted by his perseverance and tact, resulted in a harmonious union between the Hudson's Bay and North West Companies, the latter of which had already combined with the X. Y. Under conditions satisfactory to both parties a coalition was formed in 1821, while the British Government, at Mr. Ellice's suggestion, obtained from Parliament powers to confer on the new Hudson's Bay Company rights and privileges extending over the country east and west of the Rocky Mountains not included in their own chartered territory, tenable for a term of twenty years. These privileges of exclusive trade in the Indian country outside of their own limits the company surrendered in 1838 with an application for their renewal. An inquiry into the working of the system under the management of the Hudson's Bay Company was instituted by the Colonial Office and the Board of Trade, the result of which was an expression of the entire satisfaction of the imperial authorities with the system of trade and government of the company, and an extension of the term of the temporary license to trade for twenty years more.

On his arrival in the settlement Lord Selkirk had provided the colonists with agricultural implements, seed, grain and other necessities, but as the season was far advanced before they could be used, the harvest of 1817 was so scanty that a famine ensued, and the people again passed the winter at Pembina, subsisting as best they could on the produce of the chase. The spring duties of ploughing and sowing were duly performed, and men hoped the harvest of 1818 would turn out well, but an army of locusts made its appearance and in one night cleared away every vestige of verdure from the fields. The grasshoppers left their eggs in the ground, and the numbers of young locusts which again in 1819 rendered agriculture impossible far exceeded those of the previous year. While the settlers took refuge at Pembina, Lord Selkirk, at an expense of £1,000, imported 250 bushels of seed grain from the United States, and this, which was sown in the spring of 1820, produced a plentiful crop in the autumn of that year.

Peace being completely restored between all parties on the coalition in 1821, the settlement at Red River made steady progress. The life of adventure, discomfort and migration between Pembina and their proper homes which the settlers had been forced to lead for eight years after their arrival in the

country gave way to one of tranquillity and greater ease than had fallen to their lot in Scotland. General contentment prevailed. The only market which existed for the produce they had to sell the colonists found in the forts of the company, where their grain was purchased to be exported for use in the establishments of the north where cultivation is impossible. Large as are the demands of the fur trade for farm produce the supply has often much exceeded them, and hence have risen much complaining, and loud cries for a wider market.

As the immigration from Scotland did not recur after the arrival in two parties of the founders of the settlement, the population increased but slowly, and few events of public moment varied the dead monotony of yearly life. The volunteers from the regiment De Meuron, who accompanied Lord Selkirk, settled numerously in the colony. The bulk of them were Swiss and Germans. Servants of the company who had spent their lives in the service retired to end them at Red River; and some of the officers, whose desire to return to their native country had withered through the lapse of time and the influence of family ties formed in the country, bought land and settled down on it for life. The representatives of Lord Selkirk sold the land to such people at a nominal price, varying from 5s. to 7s. 6d. per acre. The farms were laid off, bounded by two parallel lines running out for two miles over the plains, starting at right angles from Red River as a base line. The most valuable of these lots were such as had the largest frontage to the river, such frontages varying in length from three to ten chains. When such a farm was allotted a land deed was given to the purchaser, and his claim registered in a record kept in the company's office. In 1836 the Hudson's Bay Company repurchased from the heirs of Lord Selkirk the whole tract of country ceded to his Lordship in 1811. This step was taken as the best means of putting an end to the complications arising from the tenure of the country by Lord Selkirk's representatives. The sum paid by the company was about £84,000, and was meant to reimburse Lord Selkirk's heirs for the large sums his Lordship had spent in improving and settling the colony. This transaction was without prejudice to the interests of all colonists who had purchased land between 1811 and 1836.

The chief physical drawbacks against which the settlement has had to contend are floods, the most destructive of which occurred in the years 1826, 1852 and 1861. These are occasioned by the sudden thawing of deep snows which, forming vast sheets of water destitute of channels to carry them off, cause the rivers to overflow their banks and inundate the plains over an extent of hundreds of square miles.—*Hargrave's "Red River."*

Tippoo Sahib's Heir.

"Prince Gholam Mahomed died recently. Such were the few words of a Calcutta telegram. Not many readers were probably aware that the Prince so briefly mentioned was the last surviving son of Tippoo, the fierce Sultan of Mysore, who, after years of plodding or fighting against the hated Feringhi, fell at the storming of Seringapatam in the last year of the eighteenth century. On Tippoo's death the kingdom which his father had founded was broken up, but the province of Mysore was given back to the old line of Hindu Rajahs whom Hyder Ali had dispossessed. Tippoo's children were removed to the fort of Vellore, until the mutiny and massacre of our soldiers at that place in 1804—a disaster mainly due to the intrigues of the young Princes and their partisans—brought about their removal to Calcutta. There the Princes lived and grew old on the handsome pensions allowed them by the East India Company, and there in succession they died. Gholam Mohammed's years were more than eighty when he, too, passed away, after seeing the power which his father had defied and his grandfather placed in imminent peril carry its arms over all India, and weather a mutiny far wider spread than that of Vellore. The last mention made of him in an Indian paper was about two months ago, when the old man figured at one of Lord Mayo's durbars, and received from the late Viceroy a full measure of the courtesy due to his years and antecedents.

The Magnet.

Magnetism is the directive power of an ore or preparation of iron toward the polar regions, which varies consecutively, but regularly, at the same place, both in dip and polar declination. The two similar ends of needles increase each other's distance, and the two dissimilar ends cause approach, just as in positive and negative electricity. The affection is created by the double current in the wires, which connect and restore the positive and negative sides of an electric or voltaic excitement, and the direction, with reference to the current, is that of the tangent of a circle round the wires. The direction of a needle, as it is above or below the wires, is N. or S. It is therefore believed that, as iron and steel are luminous or scaly in their structure, like the plates and cells of a voltaic arrangement, or the membranes of a torpedo, that the iron is charged by the lateral action of the current on the surrounding space just as in all electricity.

Oats are 20 cents a bushel in Kansas.