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[The City of Mexico, says the Captain, has many warriors as well as cannoneers, who wish to crown Cuthbert Grant.]

Ville de Mexico,
Beaucoup des guerriers
Aussi des cannoniers
Qui vont vous couronner.

II

[Being refused, "Farewell!" says the Captain. "You have all left me, or will write on the page: 'Dickson, poor warrior!'"]

Adieu, mes officiers,
Vous m'avez tous laissé,
Ou marqu'ra sur papier :
" Dickson, pauvre guerrier !"

[The disappointed Captain continues to the trader of the Fur Company, "I ought to be thankful for being sent back to the fort on the Mackenzie River."]

Bourgeois de compagnie
Je dois remercier
De me faire ramener
Au fort de Mackenzie.

["Bourgeois!" says the Captain, "I ought to thank you, since with your pennies I am able to find my way back under the guidance of two Bois-Brulés."]

Je dois vous remercier
Puisque avec vos deniers
J'ai pu me faire guider
Par deux des Bois-Brulés.

III

[The poet asks, "Who has made this song?" and promises at the end to tell his name]

Qui en a fait la chanson?
Un poète du canton:
Au bout de la chanson,
Nous vous le nommerons.

[To-day at the table we sit to drink and sing: To sing again and again this new song.]

Un jour étant à table
A boire et à chanter,
A chanter tout au long
La nouvelle chanson.

[Friends! drink, drink! Celebrate the song of little Pierre Falcon, the maker of songs.]

Amis, buvons, trinquons,
Saluons le chanson
De Pierriche Falcon,
Ce faiseur de chansons.

CHAPTER XIV

LORD SELKIRK VISITS HIS SCOTTISH COLONY

LORD SELKIRK sat in his lordly hall in St. Mary's Isle at the mouth of the Dee on Solway Firth, opposite the town of Kirkcudbright. Its very thick stone wall showed that the Manor House had been an old baronial keep or castle. As he received repeated messages, long in their coming across the trackless prairies and through the middle and eastern States of America and reaching him via New York, the old warlike blood of the Angus and Douglas founders boiled in his veins at the outrages which had been perpetrated upon his colonists.

It was late in the year 1815 when he made up his mind what to do. Then with his Countess, his two daughters, and his only son, Dunbar, a mere boy, he crossed the ocean to hear, on his arrival in New York, of the complete ruin of his colony by the flight and expulsion of the people. About the end of October he reached Montreal, but winter was too near to allow him to travel up the lakes and through the wilds to Red River.

The winter in Montreal was long, but the

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atmosphere of opposition toward Selkirk in that city, the home of the Nor'-Westers, was more trying to him than the frost and snow. His every movement was watched. Even the avenues of Government power seemed to be closed against him by the influential Nor'-Westers. An appeal to Sir Gordon Drummond could obtain no more than a promise of a sergeant and six men to protect him personally should he go to the far west, and the appointment of himself as a Justice of the Peace in Upper Canada and the Indian territory was grudgingly given.

The active mind of his Lordship was fully occupied during the winter. He planned nothing less than introducing to the banks of the Red River a body of men as settlers, who could, like the returned exiles to Jerusalem, work with sword in one hand and a tool of industry in the other. The man of resources generally finds his material ready made. Two mercenary regiments from Switzerland and the North of Italy which had been fighting England's battles in America had just been disbanded, and Lord Selkirk at once engaged a number of them to go as settlers under his pay to Red River. From the commanding officer of the larger regiment these corps have always been called the "De Meurons." From these two regiments, one in Montreal and the other at Kingston, he engaged a hundred men, each provided with a musket; and then, with rather more than that number of expert voyageurs, he started, on June 16, 1816, for the North-West.

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The route followed by him was up Lake Ontario to Toronto, then across country to Georgian Bay and through it to Sault Ste. Marie. At Drummond Island in Georgian Bay, leaving the last British garrison towards the west, he got from the Indians news of the efforts of the Nor'-Westers to involve them in the wars of the whites. The Indians had, however, resisted all their overtures. Lord Selkirk again overtook his party, and in canoes passed through St. Mary's River into Lake Superior. Here a new grief awaited him.

Two canoes coming from Fort William brought him the sad news of the killing of Governor Semple and his party at Seven Oaks, on the Red River, and also of the second expulsion of his unfortunate colonists. He had been intending to reach Red River by the head of Lake Superior, where the city of Duluth now stands, and then overland to the Red River Settlement. He now changed his plans, and with true Scottish pluck headed directly for Fort William, on the north shore of Lake Superior. He found the fort in possession of a considerable number of Nor'-Westers, and made his encampment on the other side of the river Kaministiquia, opposite the fort. Here much skirmishing took place between the two parties, and assaults were made by each in turn. Lord Selkirk arrested a number of his opponents, sent some of them down the lake by an escort to be imprisoned in Upper Canada, and held a number in durance vile at Fort William. It is needless for us to enter into details of the unfortunate

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Fort William contretemps, except to say that the seizure of the fort afterward brought much trouble and loss to Lord Selkirk.

Moving some miles up the Kaministiquia River, Lord Selkirk established his military encampment, whose site is still pointed out and is still called "Pointe de Meuron." The winter was passed here; but plans were being made for a determined attack on the Nor'-Westers and for the recovery of Fort Douglas, which was still in the hands of his enemies. In March, 1817, the De Meurons and voyageurs, led by Captain D'Orsonnens and other officers, following the fur-traders' route, crossed the snows to the west side of the Lake of the Woods, and then, turning westward, followed close to the present American boundary and reached Red River. Having come some four hundred miles, they cautiously descended the Red River, and instead of landing at the Forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers made a detour to a point some miles westward still known as Silver Heights. Their approach had been conducted with the greatest stealthiness. Being old soldiers, they prepared their apparatus for attack, made scaling ladders, and, completely surprising the Nor'-Westers in the fort, captured Fort Douglas, and were ready to place it in the possession of Lord Selkirk on his arrival.

In May, 1817, Lord Selkirk bade farewell to his winter quarters at Fort William, and following the fur-traders' route arrived at Fort Douglas in the last week in June.

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His arrival at the fort was a notable event and brought great joy to his beleaguered colonists, who were in the gravest doubt concerning the future. Friend and foe regarded his arrival as an event of the greatest importance to the future of the colony and the fur trade.

There is no one of the Selkirk colonists or their descendants living to-day who saw Lord Selkirk in Fort Douglas ; but a number who were known to the writer several years ago, and who have now passed away, remembered the man and his appearance quite distinctly. He was tall in stature, slender in form, refined in appearance, and distinguished in manner. He had a benignant face, and his manner was easy and polite. He easily won the hearts of all his colonists. To the Indians he was especially interesting. They caught the idea that being a man of title he was in some way closely connected with their Great Father the King. Because of Lord Selkirk's generosity to them in making a treaty involving a subsidy to them the Indians called him "The Silver Chief," as being the source of their treaty money.

A number of the settlers who had come in the Governor's party in 1815 had seen the founder in their native Kildonan in Scotland, where he had visited them, and encouraged them, before their long journey to the colony. To his unfortunate settlers and their affairs he first turned his attention.

He gathered his colonists on the spot where the church and burial-ground of St. John's may

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be seen to-day. "The parish," said he, "shall be Kildonan." "Here you shall build your church, and that lot," he continued, pointing to the prairie across the little stream called Parsonage Creek, "is for a school." He was thus planning to carry out the devout ambition of the greatest religious leader of the Scottish people, John Knox—"A church and a school for every parish."

Perhaps the most interesting episode during Lord Selkirk's visit was his treaty-making with the Indians. The plan of securing a strip of land on each side of the river has been said to have been as much as could be seen by looking under the belly of a horse out upon the prairie. This was about two miles. Hence the river lots were generally about two miles long.

His meeting with the Indians was after the manner of a great "Pow-wow." The Indians are fluent and eloquent speakers, though they indulge in endless repetitions.

Peguis, the Sauteaux chief, befriended the white man from the beginning. He denounced the Bois-brulés. He said, "We do not acknowledge these men as an independent tribe." In consequence of this friendliness Peguis and his band settled on the banks of the Red River below Fort Garry, and have only lately moved to a reserve on the west shore of Lake Winnipeg.

"L'Homme Noir," the Assiniboine chief, among other things, said, "We have often been told you were our enemy, but we hear from your own mouth the words of a true friend." Robe Noire,

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the Chippewa, tried to express himself in lofty style: "Clouds have overwhelmed me. I was a long time in doubt and difficulty, but now I begin to see clearly."

While Lord Selkirk was still in his colony the very serious state of things on the banks of Red River and the pressure of the British Government led to an appointment, by the Governor-General of Canada, of a most clear-headed and peace-loving man as Commissioner. This appointment was all the more pleasing on account of Mr. W. B. Coltman, the Commissioner, being a resident Canadian of Quebec. Coltman was a man in a thousand. He was patient and kind and just. Though he had come to the colony prejudiced against Lord Selkirk, he found his Lordship so fair and reasonable that he became much attached to the man who was represented in Montreal and the far east as a selfish and aggressive tyrant.

Commissioner Coltman's report covered one hundred pages, and it was in all respects a model. He thoroughly understood the motives of both parties, and his decisions led to a perfect era of peace, and, moreover, in the end to the union of the Hudson's Bay and Nor'-West Companies.

Lord Selkirk's coming was like a ray of sunshine to the colonists of Red River. Being himself of an intensely religious disposition, he received favourably the reminder of the people of his promise to them of a minister. They also told him that the elder who came out in 1815, James Sutherland, who had been licensed to baptize and

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marry, had been carried away by main force by the Nor'-Westers to Canada in 1818, so that they were without religious services. They always continued, however, to have prayer-meetings and to keep up the pious customs of their fathers. This practice long survived among them. In repeating his promise of a clergyman, Lord Selkirk said to them, "Selkirk never forfeited his word."

His work being done among the colonists, he left them, never to see them again. He went south from Fort Douglas to the United States; visited, it is said, St. Louis, to find out the relations of a white man named Tanner, who had been stolen from his parents in the State of Ohio, and had been taken to the banks of Red River. In this he showed his sympathetic and obliging disposition. Coming to the eastern States and then north, he rejoined, in Montreal, his Countess and children, who had during his absence lived in the greatest anxiety. One of his daughters, afterwards Lady Isabella Hope, told the writer more than sixty years later that she, as a girl, remembered seeing her father as he returned from this long journey, coming around the island into Montreal Harbour, paddled by French voyageurs in swift canoes to his destination.

Unfortunately, his attention was immediately called to a number of unjust and vexatious lawsuits and actions brought against him in the courts of Upper Canada. These legal conflicts originated from the troubles about the two storm-centres, Fort William and Fort Douglas, where the chief

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opposition had taken place. The influence of the Nor'-Westers was so great in Montreal that the United Empire Loyalists, the governing body at that time in Upper Canada, sympathised with them against the noble philanthropist. Justice was undoubtedly perverted in Upper Canada in the most shameless way. Weak in body at the best, Lord Selkirk, by reason of his losses, misfortunes, and legal persecutions, began to fail in health. With the sense of having been unjustly defeated, and anxious about his colonists in Red River, he returned to Britain to his beloved St. Mary's Isle. A copy of a letter to him from Sir Walter Scott, his old friend, is in the hands of the writer ; but Sir Walter states that he himself was too ill at the time to lend him aid in presenting his case before the British public.

Heart-broken, Selkirk gave up the struggle. With his Countess and family he went to the South of France, and died on April 8, 1820, at Pau ; and his bones lie in the Protestant Cemetery of Orthes, near by.

But Lord Selkirk had not fought in vain. He had broken down, single-handed, a system of organised terrorism in the heart of North America ; for the Nor'-Westers never rose to strength again. They united in a few years with the Hudson's Bay Company.

He established a colony that has thriven, because of being composed of men, women, and children who took prime hold of the land on which they settled ; and while other parts of

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North America occupied by the Hudson's Bay Company were lost to Great Britain on the ground that fur-trade occupation does not in international law stand as real settlement, yet this Selkirk colony held the West for Britain and Canada as their possession.

That the British flag flies over Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta to-day is due to the establishment of the Selkirk colony. The Earl of Selkirk cherished a lofty vision. No doubt he made mistakes in action, in judgment, and in a too great optimism; but if we understand him aright, he bore an unstained and resolute soul.

Scottish men and women all over the world are an example, that while adaptable and able to carve their way to success, yet they can suffer for an ideal, and are able to make any loss or any sacrifice rather than let go that which they hold to be of the highest mental, moral, or spiritual value. So was it, we maintain, with Lord Selkirk :—

Only those are crowned and sainted
Who with grief have been acquainted ;
Making nations nobler, freer,

In their feverish exultations,
In their triumph and their yearning,
In their passionate pulsations,
In their words among the nations
The Promethean fire is burning.

But the glories so transcendent
That around their memories cluster,
And on all their steps attendant
Make their darkened lives resplendent
With such gleams of inward lustre.