
CHAPTER III

THE SCOTTISH FUR TRADERS OF MONTREAL

NOTHING is more notable in the history of the beginning of trade in Canada, after the turmoil of the conquest of 1759 had somewhat settled down, than the energy and skill with which a band of men—chiefly Scottish—engaged in the opening up of the fur trade by way of the Ottawa River and the Upper Lakes to the great prairies and mountains of the Canadian West.

This was work of the most adventurous kind, and the pluck, enterprise, and managing ability of the Scotsman in Montreal fully showed itself in this fur trade movement in the North-West.

Moreover, there was a special fitness in this work in the North-West being undertaken by Scotsmen. It is a country with a decided winter, abounding in fur-bearing animals which amid the snows reach their best development and produce the most precious furs. The Scotsman belonged to a northern clime ; his Highland hills—though not to be compared with the Rocky Mountains which he was to face—were yet rugged and

