



Lower Fort Garry

One of the Most Perfect Surviving Symbols of Last Century's Fur Trade Empire of Western Canada, Lower Fort Garry, with Its Lawns and Flower Beds, Is Now the Colourful Retreat of the Winnipeg Motor Country Club

A HUNDRED and four years ago in the council chamber at Norway House, it was resolved to build a fort at the rapids of the Red river.

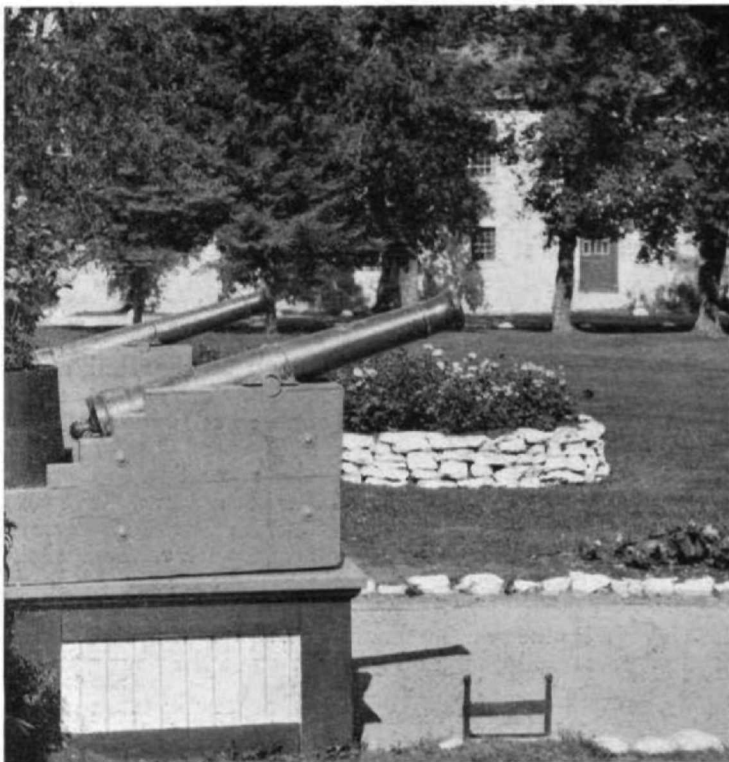
Stone was quarried, shaped and drawn by winter along the frozen river, and during long summer days there arose on the river bank dwellings and store houses, then bastions and walls.

Later within these walls strode men—deep chested, lean men—tempered in mind and body by the Canadian wilderness. On the lawns, now dedicated to summer leisure, voyageurs from Hudson Bay and the Mackenzie, from the Pacific and the valley of the St. Lawrence, sprawled in their brief interludes of idleness. In winter, with shouts and barking, dog-teams assembled.

Bugle calls, the tramp of the Queen's troops and the clatter of cavalry, all these have been echoed back by the walls, walls which, guiltless of blood, served a nation's purpose—their very presence

giving security to the colony of the Red river. Anarchy reigned. Upper Fort Garry was seized by rebels, property was confiscated, and loyal subjects of the Queen were imprisoned. In August of 1870 two men met on the river bank—Donald Smith, later to be Lord Strathcona and Governor of the Company, and Colonel Sir Garnet Wolseley. The next day came boats filled with soldiers, their uniforms worn after their forced journey from Eastern Canada. A pause for a meal, then on to Winnipeg on horseback and in creaking Red River carts, slipping and floundering in the pouring rain, only to find Riel had flown.

Within the residence were planned some of the greatest projects of the Company; there Sir George Simpson and Dr. John Rae pored over the meagre Arctic maps to plan the search for Franklin. To Murray, Christie, Sinclair, Macfarlane, Flett, and scores of others, it was home. And in the mellower



Side: The old guns point towards the river gate from the residence steps, today the club house of the Motor Country Club.

Top: Well kept lawns and shady trees, flower beds and gravel paths, where once fur traders walked and dog-teams loaded up.

Summer, summer, summer!
Soundless footsteps on the grass.

—Galsworthy



Top: The limestone walls, monument to a Scottish builder, are three feet thick; five years' labour of a hundred years ago.

Side: The passing of the hours, births, marriages and deaths were all rung out on the bell hanging near the residence door.

years the families of the Fur Trade found the summer pleasant at the Lower Fort. To many scattered throughout the world today the earliest memory of childhood play is bound up with white walls and bastions. Today the fort is one of the beautifully complete symbols of the Fur Trade empire — a vigorous and enduring monument of other days and other ways. We need not be blind worshippers of "good old times" to feel the spell of age and to taste the flavour of adventure.

