

by the Professor or the Presbytery, though this was not always adhered to.

At all events the year 1824 saw this, *the pioneer band of preachers* trained on colonial soil fully at work.* This was an important event to the infant Church, as bearing upon the supply of ministers, but particularly as determining the question of the possibility of training men in this country for the work. We can scarcely realize now, that there should ever have been any doubt on the subject, or that the friends of the effort should have felt considerable anxiety regarding the result of the experiment. The present generation can scarcely understand how it should have been regarded as an experiment at all. But an experiment it was, and one in regard to which its friends had many fears, while others regarded it as without the least doubt destined to ignominious failure. The very idea that men born in the woods of Nova Scotia, who had never even seen Scotland, trained here in an institution with at most two professors, could become acceptable preachers, was scouted as the height of absurdity. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth," was the sentiment freely expressed. Native preachers were derided in advance, and when they first appeared in public, there were those who went to witness their failure and with it the end of the whole scheme. We need not say that all this made the occasion of the commencement of their labors an exceedingly anxious time to the young men themselves. It is mentioned that Mr. Patterson was first to preach in Pictou town, then claiming to be something like the Athens of the Province, and Mr. Murdoch the second.

But they proved *a decided success*. They had their different gifts, but all gave promise of usefulness. Among them as a preacher, John McLean soon took the first place. Others were superior to him in breadth of intellect or scholastic attainments, but in the fiery energy of his nature, and the earnest and melting tenderness of his address, and thus in his power to command the feelings of an audience, he has not been surpassed, I think scarcely rivalled among those trained in our hall to the

*The Presbytery of Pictou some years before had licensed the Rev. John Cassilis and afterwards ordained him at Windsor. But he had been educated at St. Andrew's University in Scotland.