

Our Contributors.

PRESBYTERIANISM IN NEW FOUNDLAND

BY J. O. FRASER, Esq.

Fifty years ago the commercial business in St. John's was conducted chiefly by Scotch houses managed by resident partners and agents. Up to this time there was no Presbyterian Church or resident clergyman in the country. One of the oldest Scotch residents then in St. John's was Mr. James Fergus, who, although for many years deprived of the worship of his forefathers, waned not in his fealty to the beloved forms and ceremonies of his youth. Mr. Liddell, also a Presbyterian, who resided at *Hautax*, N.S., was a particular friend of Mr. Fergus, between whom a correspondence was kept up. To this correspondence Presbyterianism may be said to owe its origin in Newfoundland. Up to the period stated Scotsmen worshipped with Congregationalists, under the Rev. D. Ward (an earnest Christian minister), and with Episcopalians. In 1840 it was felt an effort should be made to secure a settled ministry of their own, and next year, through Mr. Fergus and Mr. Liddell, the Rev. Donald Allan Fraser, M.A., was induced to visit St. John's. A Highlander, with all the enthusiasm of his countrymen, Mr. Fergus at once won the hearts and confidence of the Scottish population, and he was called to become their pastor, which call he accepted, and very shortly afterwards, in 1842, he settled in St. John's as the minister of the first Presbyterian church built in the country. A new church, erected on one of the finest sites in the city, on land granted by the government for Presbyterian church purposes, was, in all respects, a beautiful temple. "St. Andrew's," as it was named, was formally opened by Mr. Fraser on the 3rd of December, 1843, and here he continued to officiate with much acceptance to his people. Mr. Fraser was an extempore preacher, of fine literary taste, of brilliant imaginative powers and of commanding presence. A large following was attracted to St. Andrew's throughout his brief ministry which terminated by his early death in 1845, in the 51st year of his life and the 31st of his ministry. The Rev. John McLellan filled the pulpit after the death of Mr. Fraser; his ministrations being much appreciated. Mr. McLellan was eccentric in his habits, but was of high literary and scholastic attainments and of acknowledged power as a preacher. The Rev. Archibald Sinclair, from Scotland, succeeded Mr. McLellan. He was unostentatious and undemonstrative, a logician and profound scholar. He would have shone as a professor.

At this time the Rev. Hugh McLeod, D.D., was a passenger in the steamer *Anglo-Saxon*, wrecked at Cape Race. Fresh from the battle field of the great disruption of '43, before the wounds of that conflict had begun to heal, and possessed of oratorical powers of a high order, Mr. McLeod enthused the people on the causes which led to the separation from the "Old Kirk" of Dr. Chalmers and the large number who united with him in the establishment of the Free Church of Scotland. The result was a division in the congregation which led to legal proceedings and the decision of the Courts ruling that St. Andrew's was inalienably the property of Presbyterians in connection with the Established Church of Scotland. The dissentients thereupon built "Free St. Andrew's" on Duckworth St., which was opened in 1850, the Rev. Adam Stuart Muir, of Paisley, being the first pastor. The Rev. Francis Nichol filled the pulpit of old St. Andrew's, for a few years, and he was succeeded by the Rev. Daniel McDougall. Both were Scotchmen, who after brief pastorates returned home. Then came the Rev. Donald McRae, D.D., who, as Kirk minister, held the fort against all comers until he removed to St. John, N.B. Mr. McRae was an able pastor in the pulpit

and in all other relationships. Beloved by his people they quickly built for him a handsome manse, he and his people living in the closest fellowship and truest harmony during his long pastorate. The Rev. L. Dyke Patterson succeeded Mr. McRae, and proved himself to be an excellent worker in upholding the various interests of the congregation. In 1852 the Rev. M. Harvey, LL.D., became the pastor of Free St. Andrew's where he ministered uninterruptedly and with unabated acceptance to the congregation for a quarter of a century, during the latter two years of which he was assisted by the Rev. Mr. Forsyth, from Belfast. Mr. Harvey's ministrations were marked by literary excellence in the pulpit and by the most painstaking and assiduous oversight of the congregation and of its individual adherents in all that affected their spiritual and secular interests. It is needless to say that such a man was beloved by his flock. To-day he lives in the hearts of his old friends and of their children as deserving their highest esteem and confidence, while he also retains the respect and admiration of all others in the community whose good opinions are to be coveted; his fame as a writer being world-wide. With such representatives as Doctor McRae and Harvey, Presbyterianism was strongly rooted in St. John's during their lengthened pastorates; wanderers from the fold was a thing unheard of; and the churches were refreshed and advanced in those years.

There was to be a sad awakening. Both churches were destroyed by fire in 1876. This startling catastrophe led to the union of the two congregations which was consummated on the 2nd of June, 1878, in the Athenæum Hall, on which memorable occasion the Rev. Alexander Ross, of Harbour Grace, officiated. Thus did the pilgrims meet again after a severance of thirty years. Thereupon the united congregation erected a handsome brick church on Duckworth St., in the centre of the city, at a cost of upwards of \$50,000. The Rev. L. G. Macneill, M.A., was unanimously called in 1878 to become the pastor of the United Congregation and he continued to be so until the close of 1886 when he removed to St. John, N.B. Mr. Macneill's brilliant talents—shining conspicuously in the pulpit and on the platform—placed him abreast of his brethren in the city and kept St. Andrew's well filled and liberally supported during his ministry. His originality and earnestness, and his practical presentation of the occurrences of the day continued to be attractive until the close of his pastorate. It was realized by the congregation that it would be difficult to obtain a successor equal to Mr. Macneill. The Rev. William Graham, from Edinburgh, succeeded Mr. Macneill, and was inducted on the 15th of May, 1887, and continues to be the pastor. In the great conflagration of the 8th of July, 1892, which destroyed three-fourths of St. John's, new St. Andrew's was reduced to a heap of smouldering ruins. Nothing daunted, a contract was entered into with S. M. Brookfield, Esq., for the erection of a new church of brick and stone on the site of the first St. Andrew's at a cost when fully completed of about \$50,000, the corner stone of which was laid by Governor O'Brien, on the 24th of August last. The building is rapidly progressing and will probably be ready for opening this Summer. During the earlier years of the Church's history Presbyterians were cheered and refreshed by visitations of Rev. Ralph Robb, Professor King, Principal Grant and Dr. R. F. Burns; latterly there has been an absence of visitations from the parent church.

Through the influence of the late John Mann, Esq., of Harbour Grace, a Presbyterian Church was erected in that town, where the Rev. Alex. Ross, the first pastor, officiated until 1883, when he was succeeded in 1884 by the Rev. R. Logan, who resigned his charge in 1886, and in 1887 was succeeded by the Rev. W. G. Thompson, who in 1889 resigned his charge, and in 1890 was succeeded by the Rev. E. McNab, the present pastor.

A small church was built at Little Bay Mines, where a number of Presbyterians congregated. Here the Revs. J. Scott Whittier, Cruikshanks and Fitzpatrick officiated for short periods. Owing to fluctuations in the population and curtailment of mining operations the mission was suspended and the use of this church was granted temporarily to the ministers of the Methodist Church.

A mission church at Bay of Islands, presently under the charge of the Rev. W. C. Morrison, has been maintained mainly by the church in Canada, supported by the W's. H. and F. Missionary Society of St. Andrews. This station will become of importance when the railroad now being built is completed to Port Au Basque, some 60 miles from Cape Breton. The land in the neighborhood is well suited for agricultural purposes, timber of good quality abounding, and valuable minerals—*asbestos*, copper, lead and coal being also found in quantities, inviting capitalists to operate. Already there are three companies actively at work. On no account should this station be lost sight of by the parent church, but rather it should be nurtured and built up.

Isolated as Newfoundland has been, visitations of clergy were attended by delay and trouble, but these drawbacks will soon be superseded by facilities afforded by the railroad and by a fast ferry across to the Cape Breton shore, and then it may be hoped the parent church will have a closer oversight of the brethren in Newfoundland. St. John's, Newfoundland.

THE TOWN ON THE STRAIT—III.

BY BERTRAM HEYWOOD.

The soft sighing of the summer breezes and the murmur of the tide mingling together make a music enchanting and enticing. Enchanting to the lover of nature, enticing to the lover of adventure. The door-step of many a house in the old town was almost lapped by the wavelets and from childhood the lads of the place listen to and learned the story that they told. A story it was, full of the romantic but also full of the tragic, and which, tempting to the youth as it might be, was proved by the storm-beaten seaman, and not unselfed by widow and orphan, to be of sorrowful import.

No message was more dreaded in that place by the minister of the gospel than the summons to go and tell the news of wreck and death to those whose breadwinners the storm had snatched away. But no tragedy of the deep ever proved awful enough to prevent the vacant places being at once filled. Did a father perish, the son was ready to tread a deck. Did a crew go down, a dozen men were prepared to undertake new ventures.

How is this to be explained? Perhaps the influence of heredity has something to do with it. If one generation succeeds another at the plough why should not son follow father to the sea? And so it is in this case. Many an occupation offers better returns for less risk but they cannot compete with the seaman's life in fascination. To those who know what a dog's life it is the fascination often seems doubly strange, but there can be no question as to its existence. The traditions of the place, the fact that its commerce has been largely Maritime, and the associations of the sea itself, are doubtless accountable for it and the stubbornness with which it endures.

Twenty five years ago, when the bulk of the world's carrying trade was done in wooden ships, the town on the Strait was a busy, bustling place, and a much larger proportion of the inhabitants than are now were interested in shipping and shipbuilding. Almost every family had some one at sea and the wages for their work formed no inconsiderable item in the yearly income of the household. The streets of the place, now so quiet, teemed with busy people. On some adjacent plots of ground, where now the grass grows green, the gaunt framework of many

a staunch vessel was set up and the air resounded with the clink of the caulker's mallet. Vessels of all kinds and of every tonnage from a pinkie to a thousand ton barque here left the ways. The prosperity of the place extended to the neighbouring country-side. The farmers found a ready market for their timber. A load of knees of backmatack was worth a good round sum. Beef for ship's stores was also in constant demand. For many years the old town was a famous coaling port, never taking the slightest interest in fisheries, and on almost any day during the season of open navigation a double line of vessels, none smaller than a brig, stretched all the way from the harbour mouth to the coaling wharves. In midchannel of the river, where these were, may still be seen an islet composed of the ballast of thousands of vessels that used then to trade thither from all parts of the world. Often for weeks they would have to wait for a cargo. Their crews swelled the crowd in the streets of the town. Skippers, supercargoes, and owners met in dingy little offices to settle about loads and freights. Money was plentiful and rum flowed like water. There was very little restriction in these times and in the old disused stores there can still be seen holes in the floor through which passed the pipes by means of which the rum was pumped from hogsheads in the cellar to the shop above. When men's blood was heated by rum and politics came under discussion and passions ran high the old town sometimes became too hot for comfort and the folks were glad when the last anchor had been weighed and the fleet had vanished.

Into the lives of the townsfolk some grim episode of the sea from time to time intruded itself and the minister would see another family in sombre black. Sometimes the tragedy was enacted far away, sometimes almost at the doors. For fair as the landscape is there is a hidden danger in it. All along that shore the foaming breakers mark here and there the presence of some cruel reef and when from North or West the gale blows strongly the townspeople can hear the voice of the Roaring Bull, as it is called, hungry for a prey. No better seamen can be found than come from that coast, yet spite of vigilance and skill, now and again, within sight of home, some have perished. Other not less woeful ends to a voyage have been known, as when, in the early days, ship fever would decimate a crew or a crowd of emigrants, some of whom only hailed the new land to find in it a grave.

But tragic amongst tragedies were the stories of shipwreck and death out on the high seas, of most of which word would come to stricken hearts after long weeks had passed. Perhaps a name-board picked up on the Atlantic would give a first hint of what *might* have happened. Then days must go by before hope would be finally shattered. Or a father would see his son on board his ship and bid him good-bye and wish him a prosperous voyage, and ere nightfall in a fierce gale the lad has been swept overboard and lost. And for three long months the hearts at home know nothing of it. Who shall measure their sorrow when at last the sad news comes? Such tales of agony this old town is full of. Why re-open wounds by telling them? To not a few there, one text in God's Book is dear. It is this: "There was no more sea." The long absences, the dire anxiety, the sore partings shall then be past forever. Meanwhile "They cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet, so He bringeth them unto their desired haven."

Yet, for all this sorrow, they still "go down to the sea in ships." It is a passion with them. Perhaps this is questioned. A tale will show its truth. The barque *Antelope* was commanded by Captain Dougal Grant and at the date we write of was four days out from the Gut of Canso. Accompanying the captain was his eldest son, a fine lad fourteen years of age. On that day about