

Clerk of the Presbytery with which I was connected in Ulster—and for many years the Clerk of the Old Secession Presbytery of Down, and I believe the *only* minister now living who possesses material sufficient to make a correct and authentic History of the Secession Body in Ireland. May the Lord spare this venerable man, until he put such material in a shape to be of use to the Church, when he is taken to his reward.

The hour of divine service was announced to us by a respectable and gentlemanly man from Londonderry, formerly a member with Mr. McLure. He holds a Government situation in the Crown Land Department in the town of Barrie. The Church was well filled by a very respectable and intelligent congregation, and the service was conducted *a la forme* of similar services in Ireland—so that I felt literally *at home*. Being a stranger, my brother gave me the action and closing sermons, with one table address, himself fencing and serving two tables. The entire service lasted from 11, a. m., till twenty minutes past 4; and it was listened to with a much greater decorum and apparent interest than I have ever witnessed in my own country. Some of the people had travelled upwards of thirty miles.—One gentleman, Captain W—, upwards of forty—in the colonies, the people are all ears.

I verily believe, not only from what I witnessed on this occasion, but from the testimony of the highest and most reliable character, from miles round the country, that our cause finds in Mr. Lowry a most respectable representative. He is a faithful, devoted, and excellent man—bearing the good opinion of all classes. May the Lord spare him long over his family and his congregations, and give him many souls.

In the evening, (as we had no service, and divers of our people coming from afar, behoved to return to their homes,) I worshipped in the Episcopalian Church of England. The congregation at Barrie was thin, but respectable-looking, and a solemn and devotional tone seemed to pervade the worshippers. The curate, whose name I heard, but do not now remember, preached a faithful sermon on “the Second Coming of our Lord.” The matter was good, evangelical, and highly practical—more calculated, however, to edify a believer, than to arouse an unbeliever. In the reading-desk and pulpit his manner was like that of a gentleman and scholar. He seems to be a faithful, earnest young man; and all such I bid God speed, whether in my Church or any other.

Leaving Barrie at five o'clock, on Monday morning, I traversed the Lake and reached Bradford Landing at two, p. m., where I stepped ashore. I was hailed by a tall, well-built, and gentleman-like man, who enquired whether I was Mr. Irvine. He was Thomas Maconchy, Esq., J. P., who having heard through my venerable father, Dr. Burns, of my intention to pass through Bradford, was waiting to receive me. I spent the night with Mr. Maconchy. I preached to a crowded house in the town of Bradford. The Free Church is neat and commodious, and many friends whom I met in that locality, spoke highly of the interest which Mr. M. had taken in erecting the Free Church among them. It affords me unspeakable pleasure to find one who, some twenty years ago, was a humble stripling in the neighbourhood of Cookeston, now occupying such an honourable place in connexion with the ecclesiastical, educational, and municipal interests of one of our leading townships; and it is creditable to him, as it is grateful to every Irishman to find, that Mr. Maconchy's excellent conduct and unbending integrity, have purchased him the position which he has so honestly earned, and which he so admirably sustains.

At Beaverton, I may mention, as well as at Bradford, I visited the common schools. The former a miserable log shanty, in which the health and life of both teacher and child, are in danger. The latter, a neat, commodious edifice, on a site well chosen, both as regards air, play-ground and every other convenience. The teachers, in

both cases, were Scotchmen—the former being an Edinian, the latter an Aberdonian—both superior men, being well educated, and bearing a very excellent reputation. Their schools were in a very efficient state. Indeed, I felt surprised and somewhat vexed to find such a man as Mr. Borthwick (lately from Scotland) buried in the backwoods, but this will only be until his worth, as a scholar or a teacher, becomes known. At Bradford I examined a class of junior mathematics, and was highly pleased with Mr. McPherson's method of teaching in this department.

I am glad to find from Mr. Maconchy, that the best and most friendly feeling pervades the entire christian community in the town of Bradford. I believe the bulk of all the protestants in the town came to hear me preach; and touching the peaceful character of the district, it is pleasing to record, that during the period in which the railroad was being constructed through that township, he was only called on *once*, as a magistrate, to protect the peace.

On Tuesday morning, Mr. M. drove me in his own conveyance to the Scotch settlement, where an eager and attentive congregation were waiting for me. This I regard as one of the most interesting settlements in Canada, on many accounts; but especially on account of its origin and early history. After sermon and the baptism of two *baïras*, Mr. M. and I repaired to the house of Mr. Donald McKay, elder, a native of Pictou, N. S., of Highland parents, by whom we were most hospitably entertained, and whose father-in-law, Mr. Robert Sutherland, entertained us still further by a recital of the unspeakable privations and sufferings endured by him and some thirty other families who composed the original nucleus of this flourishing settlement. They were the dupes of Lord Selkirk's deceit, and the victims of his tyranny; and finally, under Cameron, they escaped from the Hudson Bay Company. Their story is one of the romances of real life, and worthy a lasting place in the annals of western colonization; on which account the facts should be collected and recorded for preservation ere the present race dies out.

Mr. Maconchy's testimony to the industry, sobriety, and peaceful character of the settlers in this district is, that he scarcely recollects a case of litigation in the settlement since he has been in the country. The church is neat and commodious; the aspect of the people, sombre and serious; while their wrapped attention, during the preaching of the word, impresses the preacher with the conviction, that whether he is in earnest or not, they are certainly in earnest. May the Lord soon provide them with “a man after his own heart,” and until then, may he “be unto them a sanctuary in the wilderness.” Ere leaving this interesting district, on which the mind lingers with a kind of romantic enthusiasm, we spent an hour with a very nice Nairnshire lady, a widow McArthur, who has found in the Lord a husband and a father. In this, as in every other district that I have traversed since I left Toronto, I found the most unanimous expressions of affection and gratitude to the Rev. Dr. Burns, and I cannot forbear to say it, as the dictate of a most unfeigned sincerity, that if what I have witnessed in one district be a fair sample of the Doctor's doings in other parts of the Province, besides his own pastoral and congregational duties—Presbytery owes more to him than many are aware of. His name is associated with the history of every congregation that I have visited since I left the city, and must occupy a conspicuous place in the future history of Canadian Presbyterianism.

Mr. Maconchy accompanied me to King, at which place we arrived about sun down on Tuesday evening, and were most kindly treated by Mr. Noble, the Postmaster of the place, and a highly respectable and influential man, who, like many of our countrymen, has risen by his own industry, and is a credit to his country. I write at his table. I wish to despatch this by tonight's mail.

Soon after tea Mr. Noble cited his household for prayer, I acting as chaplain on the occasion. A goodly number of men, some employed on his farm and some in his store, made their appearance, and clustered around the dining-room table, each drawing out his Bible or his Psalm Book (a proof this, that God has an altar in this house). When we started the tune, Dublin, (Coleshill) to Psalm xcii. 12, giving out the lines *ut olim*, I noticed one of the party who wore a desperately Presbyterian-looking face, whom I accosted after worship, enquiring his name and whereabouts, to which he replied, “My name is Archy Murphy, of Dervock. My uncle, Hugh Gray, is an elder of Dr. Stavelley's, who has a son down in them parts where you came from, I warn't ye ken him.” I need not say how much delighted I was to find, away in one of our country settlements, among the woods of Canada, a man who felt in common with myself respecting one of my dearest friends, the Rev. A. M. Stavelley, of St. John's, N. B., a minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and one who, as a gentleman and a christian divine, is certainly excelled by none of my clerical acquaintances, either in point of principle or piety. (Of Mr. Stavelley, his father and grandfather, all Cameronian ministers, this honest Archy spoke with an enthusiasm approaching to ecstasy.)

I would like to accompany brother A. down to Vaughan, to meet our esteemed father, Dr. Burns. After such a preaching tour, however, I am, to use an American phrase, “used up,” and I scarcely feel able to do my part of the service to-day, but I trust the Lord will strengthen me.

The proceedings of the day will be furnished to you likely by the Clerk of the Presbytery, so I'll close my jots at Nobleton, and in doing so I must say I am highly delighted with my tour, and feel grateful that the Lord has given me an opportunity of opening my mouth in his name to many. To me, a stranger in this land, it is a source of inestimable pleasure to find Presbytery in such a healthy state in Canada. Only let the mind of public men rest for the moment on the testimony of a Commissioner of the Peace, and therefore a public servant of the country, respecting one settlement of Presbyterians, and “*ex uno disce omnes*,” its criminal calendar for twenty years is a blank!! No strife, no litigation, no fines, no penalties; but peace, harmony, industry, loyalty, and therefore great prosperity, mark the history of this Presbyterian settlement. Who then can deny that a system of well organized Presbytery is a Provincial benefit. What police power—what militia force, with its arms and trappings, and acts of Parliament to give effect to its pretensions, can boast of its triumphs over the human passions, as a Presbyterian gospel can do? Let the statistics of crime among the various denominations and districts speak, and they will tell that the evangelical pulpit (and our Presbyterian pulpit is purely and essentially evangelical) is the grand security of a nation's peace and prosperity. Charles the II., and men on whom his inglorious and impious spirit hath fallen, may boast that “Presbyterianism is no religion for a gentleman.” We can afford to bear the stigma, and the curse if you will—for Balaam's curses are much better and less to be feared than his blessings; but we venture to say, the opinion of the impious Stuart to the contrary notwithstanding, that Presbyterianism is a religion which has done more for the peace and prosperity, as well as for the maintenance of loyalty to British monarchy in the mother country and her colonies, than any other system that obtains within the precincts, and claims the protection of the nation's prowess. On which account I most earnestly pray that the time may soon come, when every settlement in this vast province, from Quebec to Hudson's Bay, shall have its kirk, its manse, and its minister.

Yours most faithfully,

R. IRVINE.

Nobleton, July, 1852.