

MEMOIR OF MRS. SECORD.

It is at all times an amiable and honourable sentiment that leads us to enquire into the antecedents of those who, by the greatness of their virtues have added value to the records of human history. Whether such inquiry increases our estimation of such value or not, it must always be instructive, and therefore inspiring. Under this impression I have sought on every hand to learn all that could be gathered of the history of one of Canada's purest patriots. As Dr. Ryerson aptly says in his *U. E. Loyalists and their Times*, "the period of the U. E. Loyalists was one of doing, not recording," therefore little beyond tradition has conserved anything of all that we would now like to know of the heroism, the bravery, the endurance, the trials of that bold army of men and women, who, having laid strong hands on the primeval forest, dug wide and deep the foundations of a nation whose greatness is yet to come. In such a light the simple records that follow will be attractive.

Laura Secord came of loyal blood: She was the daughter of Mr. Thomas Ingersoll, the founder of the town of Ingersoll, and his wife Sarah, the sister of General John Whiting, of Great Barrington, Berkshire County, Mass. At the close of the War of 1776, Mr. Ingersoll came to Canada on the invitation of Governor Simcoe, an old friend of the family, and founded a settlement on the banks of the Thames in Oxford County. On the change of government, Mr. Ingersoll and his struggling settlement of eighty or ninety families found their prospects blighted and their future imperilled; Mr. Ingersoll therefore saw it necessary to remove to Little York, and shortly afterward settled in the township of Etobicoke. There he resided until some time after the War of 1812-14, when he returned with his family to Oxford County. Here he died, but left behind him worthy successors of his honourable name in his two sons, Charles and James.

Charles Ingersoll, with that active loyalty and heroic energy which alike characterized his patriotic sister, Mrs. Secord, held prominent positions in the gift of the Government and of the people, and was also a highly respected merchant and trader.

James Ingersoll, though of a more retiring disposition than his brother, was a prominent figure in Western Canada for many years. He was a magistrate of high repute, and occupied a foremost position in the militia, in which he held the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel at the time of his death. This event took place on the 9th August, 1886, at which date he had been Registrar for the County of Oxford fifty-two years.

That Mrs. Secord should be brave, ready, prompt in action, and fervent