

to do so. For they had sacrificed their property and forsaken their homes, and had voluntarily chosen poverty and exile, rather than relinquish their cherished convictions, or participate in an act of rebellion which they abhorred.

At this eventful crisis, these staunch and noble-hearted refugees were kindly welcomed to British soil by the Imperial Government, and liberally treated in their new abode. The term U. E.—signifying United Empire Loyalists,—was affixed by the Crown, as 'a mark of honour' upon the families who adhered to the unity of the empire and joined the royal standard in America, before the treaty of separation in 1783; and a list of such persons was ordered to be made out and preserved amongst the archives of the State, so that these patriots might be individually discriminated from all future settlers. Free grants of land were given to the U. E. Loyalists, and further grants guaranteed to their children, when they should become of age.

The number of persons who, first and last, were entitled to the honourable appellation of U. E. Loyalist, cannot be exactly determined. It is known, however, that up to the close of the war about 13,000 souls, including many of the well-to-do class, had removed to Nova Scotia and to the Island of St. John, afterwards called Prince Edward Island. By this influx, the population of Nova Scotia, then comprising the future Province of New Brunswick, was in one year more than doubled. About 10,000 made their way, with considerable difficulty, and encountering many hardships, to the western part of the Province of Quebec, which was subsequently set apart as Upper Canada, a province of which the U. E. Loyalists were the actual pioneers and founders, as before their arrival it was a wilderness. It is with their future that we are chiefly concerned in this brief essay.

These faithful men brought to their forest homes in the wilds of Upper Canada the same noble qualities of loyalty to their sovereign, of sterling integrity, and of reverence to God, for which many of them were previously remarkable. They roared their families in industry, simplicity, and frugality; and as occasion served, helped to build up this new province of the British Crown in conformity with the sound principles of law and order which had animated and distinguished their own lives. Their occupation, at first, was to clear the land, and cultivate the hitherto unbroken forest. Several touching narratives of the sufferings to which the early settlers were exposed at this period are given in Dr. Ryerson's second volume, in the shape of personal reminiscences. But they soon triumphed over natural obstacles, and gradually converted the wilderness into a fertile and prosperous land; 'planting with their hoes the germ of its future greatness.'

Many of the original band of U. E. Loyalists attained to a patriarchal age, and evinced a mental as well as a bodily vigour which eminently qualified them to fill useful and prominent positions in their adopted country. In the annals of Upper Canada, and of the Eastern Provinces, amongst the legislators, the magistrates, the clergymen, and those engaged in all the active and honourable pursuits of life, the names of U. E. Loyalists and their descendants—during the hundred years which have elapsed since their removal thither—have been and continue to be specially conspicuous.

In providing for their material wants, the U. E. Loyalist immigrants did not lose sight of the importance of continuing to cultivate a military spirit, so that they might be able, if necessary, to defend successfully the Empire for which they had already made so great a sacrifice. A considerable number of the refugees had borne arms, on the Royalist side, in the Revolutionary War. The gallant Scot-