

MISSION TO MAGDALENE ISLANDS III.

BY REV. GEORGE PATTERSON, D.D.

As mentioned in my last, on Sabbath, 24th July, I preached on Bryon Island in the forenoon. About midday we set sail for Grosseisle, where I expected to preach in the afternoon, but the wind being light and variable the day was well spent before we reached our destination. Some of the people who had gathered remained, others assembled for an evening service, so that I had an audience of, I think, about 40.

Grosseisle in its wider sense embraces four islands, commonly but improperly so called, as they are united by marsh or sand beach. These are known as Coffin's Island, East Island, Grosseisle, and North Cape. The first of these lies to the East of Grand Entry, and contains the largest extent of upland, being four miles long and about one broad. The surface is generally high and uneven, steep hills and deep hollows, with sometimes small lakes, succeeding one another. To the north it is connected by a sand beach with the East Island, which is about four miles in length by about two in breadth. Though it has one cliff 240 feet high it is generally low-lying and marshy, and much of it is occupied by shallow lakes. Grosseisle which is again joined to it at its North end by a sand-ridge, is smaller, being less than two miles in length by less than a mile in breadth. It forms, however, the most prominent object in the landscape, being quite elevated and being distinguished by three or four conical peaks, which form cliffs over 300 feet high. These have suggested the name. From the summit of any one of them the view on a summer day is said to be of surpassing grandeur. North Cape is a small circular island about half a mile in diameter, joined to Grosseisle by marsh and sandy beach.

The shores of this group, if I may call it so, present a varied and often very striking appearance. Besides the high cliffs of Grosseisle, there are others as at North Cape, Old Harry Head, and East Island, between two and three hundred feet high, and sometimes worn into rugged or even fantastic shapes. Then there are miles of sand ridges, inside of which are peaceful lagoons, while again the low-lying sea-board, with reefs extending for miles seaward, and sometimes spurs of sand, covered with shallow water, are

sometimes more dangerous to navigators than even the loftiest cliffs.

In that part of the island which I saw, the soil did not seem as good as on the other. In some places I saw sub-soil of white sand, on which the growth and decay of vegetation had formed a peaty mould. But still the crops were generally fair. The inhabitants subsist mainly by the fisheries, but the most of them cultivate small plots of land, from which they receive a good return according to the labor bestowed upon them. Much of it is still covered by wood, stunted in dimensions.

The gentleman who took the census in 1881 told me that it contained at that time a population of 200 souls, averaging $6\frac{1}{2}$ to a family, and that he is satisfied that it has increased since. The permanent residents, except one family, are English-speaking and Protestants, though a considerable number of others come to live here during the fishing season. This is the

LARGEST BODY OF PROTESTANTS

upon the group. They have a neat church situated on a sunny slope on the southern side of a conical hill which form the North Cape. Near it perhaps half the inhabitants are clustered, the rest being scattered at various points toward the other side of the island. It was built by their own efforts with some aid from the Church of England Missionary Society, and is now connected with that body. Some were anxious to open the church and have me preach in it, but of course I would not consent to such an arrangement.

Before going further I must give some account of the history and position of affairs ecclesiastically among this people. The whole Protestant population of the group is over 500.

THE ORIGINAL SETTLERS

were from many different quarters. Some sixty years ago several families moved from the East River of Pictou. Several others went from the County of Shelburne, and also from P. E. Island. Then at different times sailors who had been wrecked or otherwise drifted here, made it their home, among whom I found English, Scotch, Welsh and Jersey men. Lately two brothers Leslie from Spry Bay, Halifax County, have commenced business on Grindstone.

In religious profession the majority