

Book Notices.

MEMOIR OF SIR BRENTON HALLIBURTON, late Chief Justice of Nova Scotia, by Rev. G. W. Hill, M. A. Halifax, printed by James Bowes & Son.

The above volume has only recently fallen into our hands, and yet we trust it is not too late to express our gratification at such a memorial of the late lamented subject of it. The character of the deceased, his long career, his public services, as well as the interesting events connected with his history, rendered him worthy of some such memorial. The present is satisfactory so far as it goes. It gives the leading facts of Sir Brenton's history, describes the principal public discussions in which he was engaged, and gives specimens of his writings on some of those questions, in which he took a prominent part.

Sir Brenton was of Scottish descent by the father's side, his father having been the son of a Presbyterian clergyman in Haddington, Scotland. By his mother's side he belonged to a family which emigrated from England to Boston in the reign of Charles I., and had risen to wealth in the old colonies. He was born at Newport, Rhode Island, on the 3rd December, 1775. His father having espoused the side of the British Government during the American revolutionary war, the family removed to Nova Scotia. Brenton was educated in England, and returning to Nova Scotia in the year 1791, he commenced the study of law, but soon after entered the army, where by his good conduct he attracted the notice of the Duke of Kent, while commander in chief in Nova Scotia. At the peace of Amiens he resigned his commission in the army, and resuming his study of the law, he was admitted an attorney and barrister in 1803, was made a judge of the Supreme Court in 1807 at the age of 33. In the year 1816 he was appointed a member of the Council of twelve, which then exercised legislative and executive powers. In 1833, he became Chief Justice and *ex officio* President of the Council. In 1837, the Council being remodelled, he retired from politi-

cal life. His death took place on the 16th July, 1860.

One of the most interesting parts of it is a description of Halifax, the social habits and the moral character of its inhabitants, during his early years. Regarding its religious condition the author remarks.

"Unhappily those days were eminently irreligious days. The laxity of sentiment and the disregard to the doctrine and precepts of the gospel were painfully manifest. Noble exceptions there were—bright spots amid the murky clouds—refreshing oases in the desert. But the testimony left on record of those whose opinion is worthy of trust is unanimous, that religion was treated with indifference by the many, with scorn by some and with reverence by but few. To cite none others, the first Bishop of the Diocese was so impressed with the fearful condition of the community, the general tone of society and the debasing tendency of the opinions prevailing, that he wrote a letter to some in high places, which is still extant, bemoaning in no measured terms, the terrible degeneracy of the days, and urging that some steps should be taken to erect barriers against the impetuous torrent, which threatened to overwhelm religion and morality. The lament was the same from such men as the pioneers of the Scottish Church and Wesleyan denomination, in whose biographical memoirs, these views are to be found. And from a letter of the late Chief Justice we gather like sentiments on the subject. There were zealous clergymen, but their efforts were productive of comparatively little good in the town itself. Some heard and took heed, but the majority turned a deaf ear to their warnings and counsel. Many under the cloak of their not being members of the Church of England, kept themselves aloof from its sanctuary and its clergy, and not being provided with ministers and teachers of the denomination in which they were professedly brought up, were left to their own devices. For some time there were but two places of worship beside those of the Establishment; but towards the end of the century others arose; the Wesleyans, the Roman Catholics, the Baptists, as well as the churches of Scotland and England had