

the Rev. Alexander Mackay, M.A., arrived among them.

Mr. Mackay was the first native of Nova Scotia who studied for the Church of Scotland, and returned to labour among his countrymen. He is a graduate of the University of Aberdeen, and received licence and ordination from the Presbytery of the same name. Associated as he was for fifteen years with the trials and hopes and disappointments which chequered the history of the Kirk in the Maritime Provinces, few men are better acquainted with its history, and, certainly, few men have laboured more earnestly and unselfishly in her interests. With the same zeal and fidelity—the heroism it should be called—which he has manifested since he came to Ontario, he began his ministerial work in this corner of the Lord's vineyard, and subsequently laboured throughout the bounds of the Synod in most of its congregations. If further proof is wanted of his earnest desire to promote the interests of the Mother Church in Nova Scotia, it may be found in the voluminous correspondence which he carried on during many years with the Colonial Committee, the Universities, the leading ministers of the Church, and the students of Divinity. If it is asked why he himself abandoned the field, it can only be answered,—he was over-worked. By his removal to Belfast, Earltown became vacant again, and continued so till 1861, when the Rev. William McMillan, also a native of the Province, was inducted, whose name will presently recur as the minister of Saltsprings.

The Rev. James McColl, formerly of DeSable, P. E. I., the present incumbent, was inducted on the 14th November, 1872. Since 1868 two very handsome churches have been built in Earltown, the one at Tatamagouche Falls, the other in Earltown centre. These are *Union Churches*, that is, they were built by the joint efforts of the two branches of the Church, and have since been worshipped in alternately by them. Nevertheless, Earltown and West Branch have as yet declined to be merged in "the Presbyterian Church in Canada."

The congregation are free of debt and are able to pay a stipend of \$1000. The manse, however, is becoming "old and gray." The same may be said of the church at West Branch, which is just a little out of keeping with the other improvements in that locality. There are about 200 families connected with these congregations, well able to keep abreast of the age in style and comfort.

EAST RIVER OF PICTOU :

EAST AND WEST BRANCHES.

There is one of the largest congregations

in the county, or rather, two large congregations in one. The twain Churches of St. Columba at the West, and St. Paul's at the East Branch, eight miles asunder, are respectively twenty and twenty-four miles from Pictou—situated in a district of country singularly beautiful, whose hills abound in coal and iron and other valuable minerals. The inhabitants are all of Highland descent, from Ross, Inverness and Su herlandshires. Yet, even here, "the language of Paradise" is no longer the vernacular. It is fading away before that of the *Sassenach*. But what of that? There remains the ancestral niety of the people, who are said to be more than usually well versed in Scripture, devout, strongly attached to the Church of Scotland; remarkable for uprightness of character and regard for religious ordinances. In both congregations there are about 250 families, of whom about 150 belong to the West Branch. The churches are respectively seated for 750 and 700, and are well attended, not only on Sabbaths, but at the week-day prayer meetings and other occasions also.

Their first pastor was the Rev. John Macrae, now the parish minister of Stornaway, Scotland, who was settled here in 1827. His ministry will not soon be forgotten in Pictou County, for he was a power among the people. During the last months of his ministry he hardly once preached, except in the open air, because no building could contain the thousands that gathered around him.

No people on the face of the earth, it is well known, so instinctively give themselves up to hero-worship as the Highlanders, and of all Highlanders none are more demonstrative than Highlanders in the Colonies. It is superfluous to ask the reason why. With an imperishable love of their native mountains and glens, and an undying memory of sacred scenes and associations in the land where their fore-fathers sleep, how could it be otherwise? As the captive Jews hung their harps on the willow trees and wept by Babel's stream, while they thought on their loved Jerusalem, so the people of East River, and of Pictou county, had accustomed themselves to say, "how shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" And as one and another of their ministers, who had often caused their heart-strings to vibrate with the rhythm of their dear Gaelic tongue, left them and their desolated sanctuaries, such parting scenes as is now referred to were as true to nature as when the elders of Ephesus in the apostolic days, kneeling on the sea-shore, fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, "sorrowing most of all that they should see his face no more." Independent testimony makes Mr.