

THE
Home and Foreign Record
OF
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF THE LOWER PROVINCES.

JUNE, 1863.

THE LATE REV. J. W. MATHESON.

The Rev. John William Matheson, the second son of Mr. Alex. Matheson, was born at Roger's Hill, County of Pictou, on the 14th April, 1862. He enjoyed the high honour of a pious ancestry. His paternal grandfather, a brother of the late WILLIAM MATHESON, Esq., was one of the first elders ordained by the late Rev. Duncan Ross after his settlement at West River. He was a man of devoted piety and universally esteemed. He continued during the whole of the ministry of that eminent servant of Christ, and for a short time under his successor, to discharge the duties of that office with credit to himself and benefit to the congregation. By his mother's side Mr. M. was a great grandson of Kenneth Fraser, one of the first elders ordained in the County of Pictou, under the ministry of Dr. McGREGOR, and particularly noticed by him in his autobiography for his amiable disposition and christian knowledge. The piety of his ancestors was continued in his father's family, in which from his earliest years he enjoyed the benefits of a thorough christian training and example. From early life he appeared in some degree under the influence of religious truth, and was always correct in his deportment. It was not however, till he was about sixteen or seventeen years of age that he gave decided evidence of having passed from death unto life. At this period he passed through a season of deep religious conviction. He was then, as always, unusually silent regarding his feelings, but from those closely associating with him the severity of the struggle through which he was

passing could not be concealed. The intensity of his emotions appeared in his countenance and behaviour. After a time he emerged into the sunshine of Christian hope and joy, and gave the first indication of the change that had passed over him, by intimating to his parents the desire to study with the view of preaching the gospel. From this early period he also gave hints that his mind was directed to the Foreign Mission field, and thenceforward his prayers in the family circle plainly revealed the place which that work occupied in his heart.

Up till this time he had enjoyed only the ordinary education of a country common school, which then, as yet in many parts of Nova Scotia, was poor enough. To prepare for the Seminary he commenced attending the Grammar school, at Durham, then under the charge of Mr. Daniel McDonald. This was at the distance of four miles from his father's house, the road leading over some steep ascents and bleak hills. Yet in winter's snow and summer's heat, in the rain and blast of spring and autumn, he daily walked thither in the morning and back again in the evening to his father's house, where much of the time was spent in preparing the tasks of the following day. Thirteen months were spent in this way, after which he was admitted to the philosophical classes of the Seminary of the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia. In these labours, if not earlier, the seeds were sown of that malady, which eventually ended his days. He had a few years before had measles, which as in many instances left behind it a cough, from which he was scarcely ever entirely free,