

built or even thoroughly repaired. I should only tire your patience by recounting the tyrannical acts of persecution embodied in the proclamations of these, perhaps honest, but bigotted men—we therefore hasten over this dreary period and come to the comparatively happy epoch of 1784. On the 24th of October of that year a proclamation was published pursuant to the instructions of his Majesty, George III. to the Governor, Justices of the Peace, and Magistrates of the Island, whereby liberty of conscience was allowed to all persons in Newfoundland, and the free exercise of such modes of religious worship as are not prohibited by law, provided people be contented with a quiet and peaceable enjoyment of the same, without giving offence or scandal to Government—thus Catholicity was permitted and the days of open persecution were happily at an end. It may be interesting, especially to Catholics, to know the state of the Church here before that time—Protestantism being the established religion, ministers were stationed in the principal settlements, but the few Priests in the Island had no fixed abodes—they usually came out disguised in the fishing vessels, seldom staid long, and had no regular missions, as the surveillance of the local Government was too strict. In the same year of toleration, 1784, Dr. O'Donnell, the founder and father of the Church of Newfoundland, landed in the Island. Born in 1737 in Tipperary, he spent a large portion of his life in the Irish Franciscan Convent of Prague in Bohemia; afterwards, as superior of the Franciscans, in Waterford, and subsequently Provincial of that order in Ireland. He was the first regularly authorized missionary in Newfoundland after it became a purely British settlement, and no man ever had British interests more at heart—he mainly saved the Island to the British crown when a mutiny broke out among the troops under the command of Col. Skerrett. By his influence among the Irish population he prevented the disaffection from spreading, and saved the Colony. If such a service had been performed in these days by one of the Dominant Church, his reward would be a peerage and a pension; to Dr. O'Donnell the British government granted not a peerage but the munificent pension of £75 or £50 (I am not sure which) per annum for his life; however, they acted consistently. Catholic loyalty is an affair of conscience, and consequently he only gave to Caesar what was due to Caesar. As long, however, as rewards are given by the nation to those who do their duty, especially when that duty becomes, through extraordinary circumstances, a great public benefit, so long will the stinginess of the Government of that day to Dr. O'Donnell be condemned by all right thinking men. Dr. O'Donnell was at first only Pre-