

Letters of a Pioneer

by

Alexander Dingwall Fordyce

PUBLIC ARCHIVES
OF CANADA

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Edited by Arthur W. Wright

The following letters were written by Alexander Dingwall Fordyce after his arrival in Canada in 1835. They are interesting and valuable, not only as casting light on details of the settlement of the Township of Nichol, Wellington County, Ontario, but also as showing the actual conditions of pioneer life in Upper Canada at that time, from the point of view of an actual settler, of good education and refined tastes.

The letters are written on thin foreign letter paper, and the writing is often crossed. The writing is very neat. The utensil used was a quill pen of the kind that Mr. Fordyce continued to use all his life. The letters are in possession of his nephew, Mr. Alexander Cadenhead, Toronto, who kindly permits their publication in order that they may be preserved on account of their historical value.

Alexander Dingwall Fordyce bore the same name in full as his father, and was born in London, England. He attended the elementary school of Gilbert Falconer in Aberdeen, then the Grammar School and Marischall College in the same city. When still quite a young man he emigrated to Canada in 1835, settling in Nichol Township, some four miles from Fergus in what was known as the Fergus Settlement, adjoining the Bon Accord Settlement. After a time he removed to Fergus, where he lived for many years. In 1856 he was appointed Local Superintendent of Common Schools for the Northern Division of the County of Wellington. In 1871, under a new law, he became Public School Inspector for the same district and retired in 1878. He was a cultured gentleman, kind and lovable, never robust of frame, but unswervingly devoted to a precise performance of every duty.

LETTER NO. I.

Copy of Letter from Alex. Dingwall Fordyce, jun., to Alex. Dingwall Fordyce, sen.

Addressed, (Single Sheet ; Paid to New York.) Alexander Dingwall Fordyce, Esq., Millburn Cottage, Aberdeen, North Britain, Via New York and Liverpool.

Postmarks—These are indistinct. One appears to be "City of Toronto, U. C., July 1, 1835." Another oblong one bears part of the name "Liverpool" and the letter "S" legible. Another has the date Aug. 8, (?) 1835, and the letter "E."

Endorsement—"Fergus, 26 June, 1835, Alex. Fordyce, Rec..... Ans'd 21 Aug." This is in different handwriting, probably the father's.

Map—On one side of the foolscap folio is a map of Upper Nichol, with the names of the settlers on the eastern half filled in on the several lots :

Con. XIV.—9. Andrew Grant. (Brook through corner of it.) 10. Dav'd Henderson of Dallachar. (House near line and river.) 11. Dav. Henderson. 12. Day'd Smith of Kingcaussie. (House near road Beaver Meadow.) 13. Alex. Clark of Woodcot. 14. Jas. Young and Don'd Wallace. 15. Lobert Low. 16. Jas. Duguid. 17. Jas. Duguid. (House near east corner.) 18. Geo. Skene. (House near north corner, near Duguid's.) 19. Alex. Drysdale Ferrier. (The "Drysdale" is scored out with lead pencil. It should have been "David.") 20. A. D. Ferrier. 21. Jas. Webster of Kincaig. 22. J. Webster. 23. J. Webster. (Springs marked on S. E. side with a brook running into the Grand River near by. S. West is marked a block "Part of Mr. Wilson's purchased from Mr. Gilkinson.")

Con. XV.—Lot 4. David Morice, jr. (With Beaver Meadow near middle of lot. The Esk is marked as rising in "The Six Nations" N. W. and flowing through this and many other lots into the Irvine) 7. Jno. Gartshore. 8. Thos. Williams Valentine of Irvineholm. 9. T. W. Valentine. (House near S. E. line and river.) 10. T. W. Valentine. 11. Alex'd Dingwall Fordyce of Lescaigie. 12. Geo. Colquhoun Hamilton. (With Beaver Meadow marked.) 13. G. C. Hamilton. 18. Dav'd Morice of Beech Hill. (House near S. corner.) 19. Moore. (House near middle of N. E. end.) 20. Burns. (House near middle of N. E. end.) 21. Dav'd Ferguson of Elmbank' (Bea-

ver Meadow near centre with brook to river through Fergus.) S. of this is marked the plot of the Village of Fergus, with only a small corner (E) over the river.

Con. XVI.--8. Robt. Keith Dick. (Brook into Irvine.) 9. R. K. Dick. 10. R. K. Dick. 16. Geo. Wilson. 17. Wm. Reid. 18. Jas. Davidson. 19. Chas. Allan of Strathallan. 20. C. Allan. 21. Wm. Buist of Beechwood. 22. W. Buist. (A brook runs down from lot 15 into the Grand.

Across the river are marked 8 lots running down from "Col. Clark's part of the Township" to the Grand River. The two N. E. are marked A. D. Ferrier. The next is blank. The next "Hugh Black." The next four, Geo. Wilson.

The Township of Garafraxa is marked on the N. E. and the Township of Woolwich on the S. E. The Village of Elora is marked on the S. corner, all S. E. of the river.

THE LETTER

Fergus, Upper Canada

26th June, 1835

My dear Father,—

Another month has now passed away since I wrote you last, and no letter has yet reached me from you: so you may suppose how anxious I become for the arrival of the Stage Waggon, every Thursday evening. I thought you intended to write by the Brilliant to Mr. Fergusson, and to send with it an account of the expense of my outfit—but I suppose that its sailing so soon after us had made you not write, in order that when you did so I might have later accounts of you all, which will render them much more interesting. I will at any rate have an answer to my first letter, I expect, by the beginning of August, and you may depend on my writing you regularly once a month. In expectation of hearing by the Brilliant I went over and saw Brown the Auctioneer at his clearance about a fortnight ago. They had arrived a few days before and he seemed very well pleased with his purchase, the situation of which you will understand by the annexed Plan although I have not put down his name. It adjoins Mr. Henderson's and extends down to the Irvine, so that we are pretty near neighbors. Melvin, who came out with him, adjoins him on the other side of the river, and Elmslie is in the concession adjoin-

ing to Brown. I am now located and shall give you the particulars of that important event, and shall be glad to hear from you what you think of it.

On the 1st of June Mr. Ferguson (who, you will recollect, was up here for a few days) left this in the Stage Waggon which on that day our landlord, Mr. Black, started for the first time. It leaves Fergus on Monday morning at 7 o'clock; stays all night at Mr. Black's at Puslinch; and reaches Hamilton on Tuesday, which it leaves next morning and returns here on Thursday evening. It carries passengers and goods, and goes regularly every week. Mr. Ferguson recommended to me the two lots, No. 11 in the 14th and 16th concessions, and on my remarking to him that there was no creek running through either, he assured me that there could be no difficulty in getting good water sinking for it; and he said that if I fixed before that day week, Mr. Webster, who was on that day going down the country, would let him know, and Mr. Valentine, who was going down to get his own Deed registered at Dundas, could get the same business transacted for me. I was disappointed of the assistance of a man called Sandy Macdonald who was to have conducted me over these lots (and who had also engaged to put up Mr. Valentine's house) by his eloping on the very morning with the wife of one of the settlers, and the lady, by this act, has not added a great deal to the reputation of the County of Aberdeen, from which she and her husband, James Davidson, come. Mr. Webster, however, on this account, went up himself with me, and after some deliberation I fixed upon the lot to which my name is put down on the Plan.

You will perceive that most of the good lots, those having water running through them, were taken up before my reaching this, and although there are a good many farther back, which have that advantage, yet just now there is nobody there; and I went a good deal upon this, that Mr. Ferguson did not mention them at all to me; he only told me that he had reserved the six farthest back for his own sons: and it must be some time before they be there. By that time there may be a neighbourhood, whereas now there is none.

It is certainly a very pleasant thing, especially in this country, to have a Burn running before your door, but as the advantage, the water of it gets too warm for drinking in summer, so that you must sink a well at all events. A Creek is also advantageous for watering cattle, but when I fixed upon this lot I considered myself not to be so very badly off in this respect, as the corner of my lot is not a couple of chains from Hamilton's Beaver Meadow, through which, on the concession line, a fine creek passes, and its being on a public road makes it of course public property. The other corner of my lot is not above three minutes' walk from the Irvine, so that I don't think the Beasts when I get them will die for want of water, any more than I will myself.

You will also consider that I have the advantage of being settled at once in a respectable neighborhood, and as I am to live this year with the Valentines, I will be no distance from my own Land. There is a road between me and Valentine, indicated as you will perceive in the Plan by a double line, on which account I have only one line to get run to mark out my boundaries, viz., the one between me and Hamilton, which I shall get done in the beginning of next week, as there is a Surveyor here at present. By that I will see whether or not I have got any swamp upon my Lot, as Mr. Webster thought I had a little when he went over it with me. Ten acres would be a considerable advantage on account of the Cedar which is of great use in fencing the land, and after some little time and trouble it will make the best meadow land.

When Mr. Webster went down I gave him an order on the Bank at Hamilton for £97 4/ currency, the price of the Lot which amounts in extent to 97 acres and 32 perches, the difference between that and 100 being taken up I think by the Roads. The Price is 4 Dollars an acre. The Lots are each 100 acres and run N. W. They are 20 chains in length by 50 in breadth. I think I'll call the place Lesragie—perhaps you might remember the reason, if you don't, Arthur will be most happy to tell you.

While Messrs. Webster & Co. were away I took it into my head to go and see the Littlejohns and deliver them the Letter I had for them, but when I left this I thought it was only ten miles to their place, whereas on reaching Elora, which is four miles from this, I learned it was eleven miles from thence. I left this about 5 o'clock on the morning of the 4th, and despatched my breakfast (which I carried with me) before I reached Elora. The morning was remarkably fine, but I heard for hours a great quantity of thunder without the least appearance of rain. At Elora I was put on the Woolwich Road and in a few minutes emerged from the woods on a large tract of cleared country called the English Settlement, which I suppose extended for three miles. After this, the road passed occasionally through the woods and at other times through large settlements, and a great part of it was very hilly, a good deal more so than I had yet seen.

Mr. Geddes's Farm, as well as Mr. Davidson's which is close to it, is very prettily situated on a hill, at the bottom of which a large Creek flows, and they have large clearances. Mr. Geddes, whom I saw at the door, directed me on my enquiring at him the way to Mr. Littlejohn's, to ask at the house of a person called Alph Smith (a contraction for Alpheus) a little farther on the same road. He spoke about a nearer way through a field of his, but seemed so scrupulous about letting me go by it, that I, not wishing to be under an obligation to him, took his advice of going to Alph Smith's; when you may imagine my surprise on expecting to find a Yankee as the name denoted, to find my old friend, the Seedsman of the same name, with his wife and family, along with their friend Mr. Thomson. I was regaled

with some whiskey and water, for I was very warm and dry, and we were very well pleased at our unexpected meeting. They had not been there above a couple of days, having just bought the farm which adjoins Mr. Geddes's, from the aforesaid Alph Smith, as I heard afterwards, for the sum of 1450 Dollars and half of the Crop. There are 116 acres, 60 of which is cleared, and it is situated on the bank of the Grand River, almost opposite to the Littlejohn's.

Mr. Smith's two eldest sons were kind enough to offer to conduct me to the Littlejohn's, and we accordingly got over in an absurd machine of a canoe, belonging to one of the Davidson's, which came against the opposite bank so fast as to give me a pair of wet feet. However, I suppose my feet must have been wet at all events, so it didn't much matter how ; for, just as we got across the river, the rain began to descend in torrents and, accompanied with Thunder and Lightning, continued during the greater part of the day. I found the two Littlejohns in their shanty and continued with them all night. They are both well and liking their situation and business. I never saw David before, but I should easily have known him from his likeness to his brother William. His hand is quite recovered again, I think, and they were superintending the digging of a cellar for their house, which, I suppose, they are soon going to erect. I never enjoyed anything more than the new bread which I got there quite hot, just baked by the wife of one of their choppers,—and milk, to which I had been unaccustomed, for Mr. Black has not yet got a Cow, which I rather wonder at. The Milk, however, before evening was completely soured by the Thunder. They have considerable need of a better house, for the rain descended famously down their chimney. They have got, I think, from 30 to 40 acres cleared. In the afternoon, while I was there, two of Geddes's sons came over with a piece of their sister's bride's cake, a thing I would have hardly expected to see in this Country. She had been married the day before to Mr. Gilkison who has a considerable part of this Township, and resides at his (would be) Village of Elora (altho' it isn't very like a village yet) where he has a Store. The Littlejohns told me that they had had a call, the day before, from three young men, who came out with the Brilliant, and who wish to buy land near that, and they expected them back. They accordingly came, about 8 o'clock ; but Alex'd L. went and got them a bed at a Dutchman's not far off and staid with them. After they were gone I heard that one of them had been with Middleton Rettie, and altho' I hadn't recognized him, I remember hearing that one of his lads was going out, when you accompanied me to buy some articles there. After breakfast next morning David Littlejohn accompanied me across the river, and introduced me to the Davidson and Geddes families, at whose houses we called. We then parted and I continued my walk, which was rendered peculiarly tiresome from the roads being abominably bad from the last night's and that morning's rain, and I reached Fergus in the afternoon.

My time has been principally employed in going up and down to the Irvine, and assisting there in clipping a little on Valentine's, and I hope soon to get begun to do a little on my own place. Mr. Ferguson has advised me to get ten acres cleared, which I will set about as soon as hands can be got, but choppers are rather scarce just now. It will be ready for Crop next Fall, that is to say Sept. 1836. If I were to have it ready sooner I would pay exorbitantly high for it. The common rate, and which I hope to get it done for, is 16 Dollars per acre, for Chopping, Logging, Burning and Fencing. This is very high, but 10 acres is a good beginning, and by the time they are ready, I hope to be so far up to chopping as to be able to do a good deal myself.

Mr. Webster and the rest arrived on Sunday the 4th, along with Mr. Hamilton, my neighbor, and Mr. Ferrier, who purchased his land last year, when he went out, since when he has been home and came out by Quebec, where he was formerly in a mercantile house. He is of the Bellside Family in Linlithgowshire, and is a very agreeable young man. This accession occasioned a filling up of the Tavern, and so I have never had a whole bed to myself since, for Hamilton has been sleeping with me, which is rather much in these warm nights. Among our other arrivals is a Mr. Murray of the Dollary Family in Perthshire, a Friend of Mr. Dick's, but I don't know if he will settle here. There is also a young man Allardyce, son of a Mr. Allardyce of Murlingden near Brechin, and nephew of Mr. Smith, minister of Old Aberdeen. He is an acquaintance of Valentine's, and came out on the same ship, and has been looking at several Lots here. Two Lots are also reserved for Mr. Renny, who is expected very shortly, son of Renny Taylor of Borrowfield, and a West Indian is expected every day, who has come out to Canada with the intention of purchasing land for several West Indian Proprietors; so you see it is likely [that in] a short time we shall be completely stocked.

Since I came here I have seen several raising Bees: two houses have been erected in the Village, besides Valentine's house which is close upon the Irvine, and was put up on the 20th, and the School House, which was erected on the 24th. After the foundation has been laid, and the beams fitted in the floor, a man gets on each corner, and as the Logs are put on, squares about a foot on each side of each Log, so as to let them lie pretty close to each other, and the business of the rest of the people is to hoist up the Logs which they do with their hands till the house becomes too high for that, when they use pieces of trees, with a part of a branch, which forms a kind of a Fork, which they push up the logs with. Most of the people kept quite sober, although the whiskey went round pretty liberally.

A Turning Lathe has been erected in the Saw Mill, but it shakes a good deal with the motion of the Mill, so I doubt it won't answer very well. The Steeple is now up on the Church, but has yet to be coated with tin. The plastering of the Church is finished, and the

harling outside, so that improvements are going on. Since I came there have been two travelling ministers who both preached in the Tavern. The last one a Mr. Nicoll from Eramosa, the very counterpart of Dr. Black, both in preaching and appearance, slept in our room and kept me awake almost all night with the loudness of his snoring. In addition to this, we have every Sunday had a Sermon read in the Tavern, by Mr. Moore, an Irishman, who has a Lot here, and who prays very well, and there being some good singers we got on very well.

The heat has been sometimes very great, and the mosquitoes and other Flies dreadfully troublesome, especially a small gnat, which one can hardly see, which bites tremendously; and then such a scratching of all the bites which makes them a good deal worse. The mosquitoes are worst during the night, for then you can't see them so as to catch them; you only hear them buzzing about, and must let them stick before you can kill them. They are sometimes very annoying down by the Irvine, but we try to keep them off by lighting a fire, which they dislike very much.

The appearance of the Forest is beautiful, but I don't much like walking by myself, unless there is a road, for frequently, altho' I have a compass, I get confused, and then it proves of little benefit. The principal Trees are Maple, Elm, Hemlock, Basswood, Butternut, Cherry and Cedar (which is just an enlarged species of *Arbor Vitae*) having the same leaf and the tree is of a conical form. Its branches spread very much and come almost close to the ground, so that on crossing a river it is difficult to get through them. In some parts there are Beech, Birch, and Black Ash, but very little Pine. The Soil seems to be all of the same sort, a Sandy Loam, with a substratum, in some places, of clay, in others, of limestone. The Leeks, which grow in great abundance, and are much relished by cattle, give a very unpleasant taste to the milk. They are like our Onions. The Gooseberries are almost altogether Prickles, and as far as I have seen the berries are small. Salt Pork is the Standard Dish in Summer, but at this season there is no difficulty in getting a dinner of pigeons, of which there are great Flocks, but I have not yet got spectacles so I might as well have no gun. Several Deer have also been killed by some of the Settlers. Mr. Buist has sown some of the Wheat and Barley Mr. Thomson gave me in his clearance, and it is coming up very well. There is to be a meeting of the St. Andrew's Society on the 10th of next month for the purpose of admitting new Members, of whom there will be a considerable number to be enrolled.

I have sent you on the other side of this Page a Plan of Mr. Fergusson's Block of Land in the Township of Nichol, along with the situation of Mr. Gilkison's. Mr. Fergusson's, you will perceive, is the 14th, 15th, and 16th Concessions. The only mistake which I think I have made in copying it, is having made the upper half of the Concession Line between Mr. Fergusson and Mr. Gilkison a double line.

which would denote its being a road, which it is not. The road to the Irvine does not go on the concession Line between the 14th and 15th Concessions, as there is a considerable piece of swamp there, but winds about a good deal into the 14th Concession. The first house we come to on the road is Mr. Morice's, who was a farmer somewhere between Montrose and Bervie. They are a most respectable Family. Mr. Duguid's and Mr. Skene's houses are almost close to Mr. Morice's, and are no distance from each other. They are both Aberdeenshire people. The next house and the last one which is erected close to the road is that of David Smith, an odd like little bodie, who, I think, was in the employ of Mr. Boswell of Kingcaussie. On the other road, between the 15th and 16th Concessions, you will see mentioned the Land of Charles Allan of Strathallan. He is a Carpenter in the Village, and his wife, a short time ago, had the honor of being delivered of the first child which was born in the Village. The child, on that account, was presented with a village Lot, and baptized by the name of Adam Fergus Allan. John Gartshore is a Millwright, and George Wilson is a Plasterer. No. 6 in the 15th Concession is reserved for Mr. Perry, a Turner, son-in-law to Mr. Black, the Tavern-Keeper. Nos. 6 and 7 in the 16th Concession are reserved for a brother of Mr. Henderson's, who is a medical man, and is expected out this year with his wife. Their father was, I believe, Sheriff Substitute of Caithnessshire.

I was very sorry to see in the Emigrant, a New York newspaper, the death of Mr. Douglass, only a fortnight, I think, after I left home. I have not yet got a receipt for my letter of Credit and for the other money I put into the Bank at Hamilton, otherwise I should have let you know the amount. I have reason to be thankful that I still keep my health pretty well, excepting only occasional attacks of Diarrhea, to which all new settlers are liable. However, if it doesn't go too far, it is said to be a healthy, although it is a most unpleasant thing. I will be expecting the models of doors and windows which George Cormack was going to make for me, and as my house won't be put up this year, I will have time to study them. When you hear of any opportunity out to this part of the world, I would be obliged to you to send me a pair of spectacles, from Ramage : No. 9 : as I expect to be much the better of them.

In my last letter I stupidly forgot to tell you in writing to me here to direct your letter Fergus by Guelph, as Fergus is not yet a Post Town. I should like very much to have the Aberdeen Journal out, to be sent by New York, to let me know what marriages and deaths and other interesting news are going on in Aberdeen. Give my kind love to Aunt Jessy, and tell her I hope that the Pulsneior (?) business is settled to the satisfaction of herself and Aunt Farquhar. I needn't ask how the Fishing is coming on at Belhelire (?) this Season, as by this time, I suppose it is out of your hands. Are there any more new buildings going on about you ? and are you mak-

ing out plans for the Fencing (?) of Dee Village? How is mamma keeping? Give her my kindest love, and if possible I shall write her by Mr. Thomas Webster, who is going home on a visit about the end of next month. My kind love also to Arthur, and tell him I hope the Law is flourishing. I'll maybe see him out here some day yet. How I should like to see you all out! but I'll not be so selfish as to wish it. Give dear Elizabeth and Janet my kind remembrances. I suppose Janet will have done a great many drawings since I came away. My love also to Maggy, Jamie and little Mary. Tell Maggy I didn't forget her birthday, although I wasn't at home to get a bit of the Padding. You will remember me to all other enquiring friends. The Laird and his Lady will now be situated, I suppose, at Arthurseat (?), and the Lientenant will be buckled, I suppose, before this reaches you. When is Margaret's marriage to take place? I wish them all happiness. Is Johnny getting much business in the coffee way? I hope he and his wife are well. How happy I shall be to hear that you are keeping well yourself! Do write me particularly how you all are, for I am very anxious to hear. I shall now conclude for the present, and you will believe me to be, my Dear Father, your very affectionate Son,

Ax'r Dingwall Fordyce.

LETTER NO. II.

Copy of letter by A. D. Fordyce to his father.

Address— (Single Sheet, Paid to New York.) Alexander Dingwall Fordyce, Esq., Mill Burn Cottage, Aberdeen, North Britain, via New York and Liverpool.

Postmark—Aug. 25th, 1835.

Fergus by Guelph, Upper Canada
21st August, 1835

My dear Father,—

Since I wrote you last I have to acknowledge receipt, and you will easily imagine with what happy feelings I do so, of your letter of the 1st and 27th of June—you will easily conceive my feelings, I say, if I may judge from your admirable and to me how interesting description of the opening of my New York letter, although I must say I think you were rather what shall I call it? extravagant in your expectations of getting it so soon. It is a different story, however, here, from New York. You mustn't expect to get letters so reg-

ularly (although in the end you get the same number as if I were living there, for our nearest post office (Guelph) is sixteen miles distant and the only way we have of sending our letters is by our stage, which goes but once a week. I send a letter off regularly every four weeks, but sometimes you will perceive, the letter may arrive just after the Packet has sailed, and then it has to wait a week and this cannot be obviated owing to our not having more frequent communication with the Lake.

You may suppose I was anxious to hear of you all, for it was four months since I had left home before I got my letter, which I did on the 30th July, and although I had been so very anxious, there was good reason certainly for your not having written sooner. Poor Mamma! I was so sorry to hear of her illness, and also of the children, but our being at some distance gives me the advantage, whenever there has been any ill-health in the family, of hearing both of it and of the recovery from it, in the same breath.

Your works, you say, at the village have been progressing slowly; but really, in place of being slow, they appear to me the work of magic. I can't look at the time that has intervened since I left home, but only at the day I am away and the present moment; and in this respect, I was most astonished and delighted by the covering in of the dirty Burn; but do you mean to say that it is covered in all the way from Cumming's house to the Mill, and is it covered with wood, or how? It is really a great improvement; and also the striking out of the window in the drawing room, which will give the house a much more decent appearance. The village will be quite a new place to me when I come back. As [to what you] say about my house there is very little chance of finding either sand or rock at it. [If the] foundation had [been near] the Grand River, there would certainly be both, but it will more likely [] I am astonished that [] has not got married, although (you say he wishes promotion) I am not so [much so] as at his sister Margaret, whose marriage is such an old story.

I think I have to ask an explanation of another piece of information you give me, that William Fordyce is to form a mercantile establishment in Charleston (So' Carolina, I suppose). Is he to reside at Charleston, or is it in connection with his house at Havre? He would be the second of the Family in North America if he were to stay at Charleston---which would always be one nearer. I was very sorry also to hear of Aunt Farquhar's accident; she is very unfortunate; but I trust as you say that she will soon recover, and I hope you will let me know in your next how she is. Your mentioning the accident which happened to Mrs. Fergusson was the first intimation I had of it, but she had quite recovered I think from it before I arrived and the whole Family are quite well just now and highly pleased with their visit up here, which, I doubt, will not be of much longer duration.

According to your wish I have made enquiry here about the sending out of parcels from Scotland. Mr. Fergusson is of opinion that if a small parcel were sent out it wouldn't be paid attention to, and that therefore, if any be sent out it should be larger; but Mr. Ferrier, who ought to know pretty well about things of that sort, having been four years in a Mercantile house in Quebec, tells me that if any parcel be sent to the care of a forwarding Agent in Quebec, or rather Montreal, they will send it up to Hamilton, however small. My opinion therefore is, and you will tell me if it coincides with your own, that if you haven't opportunities from Aberdeen out all the way to Hamilton, any parcel you send should go by an Aberdeen ship to Quebec, and perhaps Arthur, when writing to his friend Clerk, might ask him to look after any parcel which might come addressed to me, and to the care of their house. I thought of this some time ago and mentioned to Ferrier the name of Gillespie, Moffat & Co., and he said there couldn't be better people to send anything of the kind to. If you have ever an opportunity to Hamilton, of course that would be better as it would save the expense of carriage between that and Quebec, and in that case any parcel would, I dare say, be taken charge of by Messrs. Young and Weir there, as there are often articles to be sent up from them here; and especially as our store here will soon be opened, Mr. Young, our Storekeeper having formerly been with the aforementioned gentleman.

22nd August. I have to thank you for your letter of the 27th June, which I received on Thursday night, and for the remittance therein contained, which I have committed to Mr. Webster, (who is going down the country with his brother Tom) to put in the bank at Hamilton. You mention also in your letter Aunt Jessy's proposing to send me for three years, or longer if necessary, £200 Stg. @ 3% per annum. I yesterday mentioned this to Mr. Fergusson, but he said he considered that just now it would be quite unnecessary. Two or three years after this, he said, it might be a matter of some moment, when I should be purchasing Stock, but for the present, he considered my own Funds quite sufficient. I have written to Aunt Jessy by Tom Webster, thanking her for her kindness, but telling her Mr. Fergusson's opinion.

Since I wrote to you last a Shoemaker from Upper Banchory (?) of the name of Baxter, has bought Andrew Grant's Lot, as you will observe by the plan I send you, and it is said that Andrew intends opening a Butcher's Shop here. On the 28th of July the Frame of the Store was raised, and it is now nearly complete, and adds greatly to the appearance of the village, especially from its being plastered and harled. It is only a pity, regarding the houses in that street, that they have not all been built on the front of the Lots. You will see this in the little sketches I am sending you: Gartshore's house, the Store and Tavern being the only houses so placed. The Store will be an immense advantage to this place and I should think would

almost supersede the necessity for Mr. Black's waggon. Mr. Young, the Storekeeper, was for six years with John Fergusson in Leith, to whom he served his apprenticeship of four years.

There are Bees of all sorts here, as I daresay you know, such as Logging Bees, Raising Bees, &c., but I will tell you of one of a rather different description, at which I was about three weeks ago, viz., for the purpose of assisting Mrs. Wilson to gather raspberries. Besides myself there were Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Wilson, Miss Fraser, Jas. & Thomas Webster, Jno. Fergusson, Drysdale, Allardice, and Squire Reynolds. We made a good day's work of it, indeed we could not have done otherwise, as we had a field of about five acres to work in, and that completely filled with bushes. We had also the pleasure of seeing a most beautiful waterfall at a very short distance from the place where we were gathering; a creek tumbling over an excessively high perpendicular bank of the Grand River, and if I ever see it again I must make a sketch of it, for I have no doubt it would make a very pretty one. It is a most beautiful place all around this, and I believe, belongs to the representatives of a General Pilkington, whose affairs are in Chancery. After [attending] to the business of the day, we had Tea at Squire Reynold's (near to whose house we had been gathering) and again at Mr. Wilson's.

The day after this we had a Mr. Campbell from Edinburgh [] W. S. (?) I believe, and son-in-law to the late Andrew Thomson. He had just come up to see the place, and is thinking of settling on the Farm below Mr. Fergusson's at Woodhill. The former time that Mr. Fergusson was up at Fergus it had been intended if the weather had been more favorable, to have an expedition through the Six Nations and the upper part of Garafraxa to the Black River, which was believed to be somewhere near there, and to follow it down to its junction with the Grand River in the Township of Waterloo; and after being put off more than once it was resolved that it should take place on the fifth of August, and accordingly preparations were made for it. Provisions provided for four days were carried by three Englishmen of the names of Sargent, Matthews and Hornby, the former of whom acted as a sort of Guide, although we had also with us Mr. MacMabon, the Surveyor. We mustered pretty strong as, including the provision carriers, we amounted to thirteen, viz., Mr. Fergusson, with his two sons, David and John; Messrs. Jas. and Thos. Webster; Mr. MacMabon; Messrs. Drysdale, Renny, Hamilton and myself. We had amongst us two (ten?) axes and three guns, and each of us had a blanket strapped to his back by a piece of basswood bark. We had hoped to have had fine weather, the three or four previous days having been very fine, though excessively cold; but in the outset we were disappointed for it rained during the greater part of the first day, altho' the next two were very good. We set out about six o'clock in the morning, and went up the line between the 15th and 16th Concessions of Nichol till we came to the head of the Town-

ship, and then went on the line between the Six Nations and Garafraxa, in the former of which we passed through a most splendid beaver meadow which must have been Fifty acres in extent. It would really have been worth while to have gone this expedition although it had been for no other purpose than to see this meadow ; it is such an astonishing thing to think of such an extent of land cleared by these ingenious little animals. At various places as we went along we saw the stumps of trees which had been felled by the beavers as the marks of their teeth were perfectly apparent upon them, and they are said still to inhabit the Township of Luther. We saw also this day the remains of an Indian Wigwan, and various marten Traps in every direction. We had some exceedingly troublesome walking in swamps, sinking into a hidden hole at almost every step we took, and when we stopt for the night we had the consolation of finding that it was Mr. McMabon's opinion that for some distance we had not been going on the Concession line, but on a hunter's as the blaze did not appear to go farther. The night was cold, but with the assistance of our blankets and by keeping up a roaring Fire before the shanty which we had erected, we contrived to keep ourselves tolerably warm. We were at no great distance from a Beaver Meadow, through which a large creek ran, and from it we were supplied with water and had some excellent coffee.

I can hardly call it a shanty, the place which was erected for our night accommodation, but it was constructed in the following manner. Two trees were selected at a short distance from each other, and against each a stick with a forked end was placed in an angular position ; the forked ends were of course placed uppermost and through them another stick was put. Against it, and against the angled ones, strips of basswood bark (cut off the trees lengthwise) were placed, of course also angularly ; which finished the construction of our habitation. A log was placed close to the side of the shanty, which served us as a pillow, and after spreading some hemlock boughs under us and our blankets above them, with our feet stretched towards and almost into the fire, we slept very comfortably, and without being attacked or annoyed by Bears, Wolves, or any other animals.

We were pretty early astir next morning, and after breakfasting and putting ourselves in marching order, we set out, and returned for some distance the same way we had come the previous day, till we came to the 30th post, the last one we had struck, and in order not to make the same mistake again, Mr. McMabon set his compass agoing, and by its direction we crossed into the other, the 2nd concession, through the greatest and wettest swamp I was ever in, and then ran up the line. We passed through 31 and 32 which belong to Messrs. Fergusson and Webster. They bought them, I believe, about a year ago, from a Mr. Alexander, at the rate of half a dollar per acre. They are good lots and 400 acres in extent, each of the Garafraxa Lots being 200 acres ; but I should suppose it would be a pretty considerable

time before they get land so far back disposed of, although they got it at a reasonable enough rate. We passed through 35, one-half of which belongs to one of our guides, Matthews, and in less than half an hour we arrived at the Black River. We found that it had high banks, but was a stream of no great size, at least when we saw it, although it certainly had the appearance of being sometimes considerably [larger]. We stopt beside it the remainder of the day, and at night we erected a shanty similar to the one we used the previous evening, but larger, and instead of placing the angled sticks on two trees we had three, not all in a line, but so, . . . We had an excellent spring within 30 yards of the Shanty, which was a great discovery, for the River Water wasn't particularly good, and we passed a more comfortable night than the former, although it was a good deal colder.

The idea was given up of tracing down the Black River as it would have exceeded the time our provisions would last; and it was resolved that we should try to get next day to our guide Sargent's house in Garafraxa; from which, he told us, there was a good road all the way to Fergus. We accordingly set out, after breakfast next morning and went down the 2nd Concession, which was very swampy, and the swamp not so very easy to get through as the former ones we had been in, owing to the land having been taken up and Settlement Duties done upon it; that is to say, the people who have bought the land, in order to secure it to themselves, have cut down the trees along their part of the Concession Line, allotted for a Road; which has made it much worse, as in place of the large trees, the line is completely covered with tall and thick brush, which altogether prevents one from seeing the holes. However, we at last got through this swamp one way or another, although you may suppose it took some time, but you will hardly believe it possible, although I tell you it as a fact, that although the distance was only five miles, we were seven hours in getting it accomplished. After doing so, we crossed (now entirely under Sargent's direction, who knew the way) the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th into the 7th Concession—in which we crossed the Irvine, and passed by several large deer licks; and arrived at Sargent's about six o'clock. It was a clearance of about sixty acres (not all his own) and a very glad sight to us after being unaccustomed for some time to such a sight. We got supper and some new milk, and all turned in for the night into his bara—which had no door, but only a kind of an opening about 5 or 6 feet from the ground. In at this we all got, even Mr. Fergusson, and the barn being almost full, the hay made a most excellent bed for us.

After breakfasting next morning (Saturday) we set out and had an excellent road all the way to Fergus, which was about ten miles distant. We passed through several large clearances, all of course, in Garafraxa, and had to cross over the 7th, 6th; 5th, 4th, 3rd and 2nd, into the 1st Concession, which is close to Mr. Buist's land beside Fergus. On our way we saw the Grand River, with a bridge across it,

and about one o'clock, got all safely back to the City, well pleased with our expedition, of which I have tried to give you as accurate an account as possible ; and as we came in we fired a volley to apprise the citizens of the event.

I daresay I forgot to mention it was in the Township of Luther that we saw the Black River, but I neither know Lot nor Concession. On our arriving at Fergus we found the Grist Mill had been raised the day before, and the coating of the Church Spire with Tin had made a great improvement on the looks of the village. I don't know that I have any more news to tell you of. I believe I told Mamma, in the letter I sent her by Tom Webster, who went away this morning, that the Church was to have been opened last Sunday, had Mr. Gale from Hamilton, who was to do so, been well. The day after I saw Alexander Littlejohn, who had come up on that account. He had had a letter from home about a fortnight before, by which he heard what you informed me of, that his mother and sister were coming out on the Arkwright.

I have been drawing a good deal since I wrote you last, and I have now the pleasure of sending you, on the other side, a correct Plan, I believe, of the whole Township of Nichol. It consists of 28,000 acres, and I believe, was originally purchased from the Government by a Col. Nicoll, after whom it is named, and Col. Clark at the Falls of Niagara. After Nicoll's death, Col. Clark bought from their representatives their right, and sold part to Gilkinson and part to Mr. Fergusson, or rather I suppose I should say, Messrs. Fergusson and Webster, [as it] is in both their names that the Title Deeds are made out. The most of the Land on the S. E. side of the Grand River, which remains [unsold] belongs, I believe, to Col. Clark.

There is now some [inter ?] change in the Tavern here, a good many of us having cleared out : Allardice to Mr. Wilson's where he is going to live during the winter ; Dick to Mr. Henderson's with whom he is going to live ; and the two Valentines to their own house, where I hope I shall soon follow them : but they wish me and Hamilton, who is going there also, to wait for a little yet. Renny is also going to live with Mr. Henderson ; and Ferrier is going to live with Drysdale in Tom Webster's house during his absence. I daresay I didn't mention to you that Tom Webster has lately purchased a farm in Garafraxa, about a mile from Fergus, with a house upon it, and Twenty acres cleared. I think I have now exhausted my stock of news, and if I have put you to some trouble in reading this crossing, you must accept my apology, which is that it was in order to let you get the Plan without any writing on the other side of it. I must, however, conclude, and with kindest love to Mamma and my brothers and sisters, not to name them particularly as I have written them all by Tom Webster, I remain, my dear Father, your most affectionate son,

Alex. Dingwall Fordyce.

P. S. Will you be so good in your future letters to me to mark the back of them that they are single, if they are really so, as in the last letter I got from you I think I have been cheated as in place of the regular postage from New York to Guelph 2/1 (2 shillings 1 penny) I have been obliged to pay 3/1½ currency which is a most exorbitant charge, and this not including Mr. Black's charge of 3d. for bringing them up, and it is a long tramp to Guelph to get redress, when I don't know that I will get it after all: however I shall enquire about it the first time I am there. A. D. F. Mr. and Mrs. Ferguson desire me to send you their kind remembrances. They have been up here five weeks with their whole Family, which [has] rendered the time much pleasanter. A. D. F.

LETTER NO. III.

Irvineside, near Fergus, U. C.

14th December, 1835

(Rec. 24 Jan'y; Ans'd 13 Feb. '36)

My dear Father,—

This is the day my letter should have been dispatched instead of only being begun to be written, but I trust you will excuse me, as I had forgot to get paper up from the Village for the purpose: and as I was in daily expectation of being able to acknowledge receipt of one from you, which I now have the pleasure of doing; as, on Saturday, when down at Fergus, I received your most agreeable and interesting letter dated 4th—14th, October, and Arthur's of the 17th. I cannot describe to you how much I was gratified by your description of the pleasure excited by my letters; I can only say that I wish they were more worthy of your acceptance, and that every sentiment expressed in them is heartfelt. I was so glad also to hear that the "younkers" were pleased with the few lines I wrote them, and I have no doubt of even their sometimes remembering their absent brother. I was much pleased with your account of Mr. Foote's Sermon on the Reformation, and greatly wish I had been with you to hear it. However, I hope our turn here will soon come, for getting a Minister out, and your list of subscribers for his maintenance both surprised and delighted me. I am sure I am heartily obliged to them all for their kindness, and I am quite certain that money could not be better em-

ployed. I hear that during the winter the Presbytery, owing to the representation of Mr. Gale of Hamilton, are going to supply the church here, which will be a great interim advantage.

I am sorry I made the mistake about Aunt Jessy's Loan, although, as you say, it doesn't matter much, but if I had looked a little more particularly to your letter of the 27 June I would have seen that what you say is, that she lends, not will lend, it to me. I might also have considered where the second cash (£150) was coming from; but we understand each other now, and I would have discovered my mistake much sooner, if the Letter the Draft was sent on had been perused as frequently as all the other letters I have received; but the fact was that you had only room to say a few words.

I am glad you were pleased with the sketches I sent; but I don't know where the errors in the perspective will be. It is very possible there may be such, but I think you should come out and examine the place itself before you pass judgment. I shall hope to see improved ones by yourself some day. Madame Janet's critical sketches will be most acceptable; I suppose she means to retaliate on me, for (ignorant as I was of the art of coloring) sometimes daring to criticize some of her paintings; but I believe in the present case she is quite right, for I myself did think my Trees were rather extra superfine; but she must not alter any of my Pines beside the Bridge, for they are quite natural.

Many thanks to Arthur for his attention about the Observers. I received five about a week ago: up to the 2nd Oct'r. You needn't have made any remark about your crossing for it is quite easily read. One part of your letter I was particularly delighted with: it was that where you say that you think none of you would have much objection to try how American air would agree with you. What ideas this excited in my mind!—along with what Mamma said, that if you would have let her, she would have been more than half inclined to come over with Mrs. Littlejohn. God knows I should be the very last person in the world to advise my dearest friends to take a step which it was possible they might afterwards repent of; but you cannot but allow that the very idea of this taking place, was sufficient to elate me considerably. As for American air, I can only say that it agrees with me every bit as well as home air; and I am very sorry that in my last letter I should have mentioned my having often been troubled with a complaint, which since I left Fergus and came to Irvineside, now four weeks, I have never had the slightest attack of, except once, and that only for a single day. I cannot explain where the difference lies between this and Fergus, but I must refer it, either to something different in the water, or to something unwholesome I have been accustomed to eat there. Now perhaps I shouldn't have referred as I have now done, my dear Father, to the part of your letter which struck me so forcibly, because it was said perhaps in a joke; but I would rather not think so, and shall not till you bid me. And why

mightn't you (as you say you wish you could) assist me to raise my house next summer. You would be able to tell the rest of the good folks what you thought of the country, which would of course bear much more weight than anything I could say : and believe me, I should like much better to see Mamma here, after you had given her your opinion of the place.

You will be glad as well as I was to see that I have now got removed from Fergus. It was expensive living there, and although I don't know what comparison in that respect Irvineside may bear to it, I should imagine there would be some difference.

I shall now tell you about our "Domestic Economy ;" (and it is very little else I know about yet, for I have not began chopping : partly on account of my not being able to determine for some time where I will chop, owing to circumstances I shall soon mention, and partly because I intend to practice on the chopping up of firewood first, till I get accustomed to the use of the axe). Well, we rise, I suppose at 8 o'clock, light the fire, which has been rested all night, and then have breakfast. Each of us takes the Baking and the washing up of the dishes week about ; and I can assure you, I am quite an expert Baker now. It is Scons we bake, but not like the Flour Scons at home. No, No; they would not be substantial enough for us. We make them as thick, sometimes thicker than your soft biscuits ; and fire them in a Bachelor's Oven. Till that very useful article was got, the Frying Pan supplied its place. But the Frying Pans here are not the same as yours. The handles to ours are three Feet long, on account of the large Wood Fires we keep. Boiled hops we sometimes use to make our bread rise, but not often, for we are not very particular. When I came up here first we just lived on bread and the remainder of some tough Ohio Beef, precious salt, a Barrel of which Mr. V. had got when he came to live here ; but we have now some fresh Beef ; and about a week ago we got a Pig ; so that we live very well. When we have to roast Beef or Pork, &c., it is done in a Bake Kettle, which is a large Pot (into which the Meat is put) with a Lid, on the top of which live ashes are strewed. The machine is then set before the Fire and the operation goes on very fast. We have no butter nor Potatoes. The former we are promised a supply of, and we have tolerably good cheese, so when I mention that we have Tea and Sugar, I think I have told you all our provisions ; and we all live very well, and no mistake. We will soon be saved the trouble of baking, as we intend to get a Barrel of Biscuits, hard ones from the Baker. We have no regular hours for taking our meals, rising or going to bed, as we just do so when we feel inclined.

I have not yet got my bed up from the Village, so I just put my Feather Bed under Mr. Valentine's, and I suppose I have as snug a berth as is in the house. Since the cold weather commenced we do not use Sheets, but just turn in amongst the blankets. The house, you might suppose, would not be very warm from having no par-

tions, but we keep on roaring fires, so that we don't feel cold. We have no chimney built, but just a hole cut in the roof, and the place about it boarded up as you see in the Farm Houses at home, where the Fire is on the hearth as with us. We burn principally Maple and Beech Logs, cut into lengths of about two and a half feet, and split. The house is 28 feet by 20, with a door and two windows in front, and two windows behind; and is situated almost close to the river, which is seen from the windows; and of which the bank the house is on is quite low. Our well is on the brink of the river, and is most excellent water. I have only once heard the wolves since I came up, and that was a few nights ago, when they certainly did hold a pretty loud concert; and as David Smith says, "It's very pleasant music, whan there is a guid thick door atween you and them."

Janet may well ask about the darning of my stockings. It's lucky that Elizabeth or she are not here, for they would be rather inclined to grumble, I am afraid, if I were to ask them to mend all the holes in them. There's hardly an evening that I haven't to sit down and work at the largest holes you ever saw, mostly all burnt; for on these cold nights, when a large fire is on, it acts much quicker than you would suppose on the stockings; but I'm an excellent darning now; and it puts me in mind of the first lesson I got on the Science from Elizabeth.

15th December.—Since my last letter the snow has scarcely been off the ground, and now I suppose it won't be for four or five months. It is better than a foot deep, and there is very good sleighing. The Irvine is frozen across and the Grand River partly. The Grist Mill was prevented from working some days, but they now keep fire near the wheels, and I believe are intending to keep it constantly going, even on Sundays. It is a work of necessity, for if that is not done, she won't go on Monday; and I don't suppose they will grind any wheat on Sunday. The weather is not settled yet, but we have had two or three most beautiful washing days. It has been very cold sometimes. On the 2nd of this month, about 9 o'clock in the morning, my Thermometer outside the window here stood at 12° below zero. Last year the severest cold they had here was 16° below zero; so that we have almost felt as cold as we [ever do.] It was really desperately cold that morning; and I was obliged to take a pretty stiff horn to prevent my getting sick upon it. Our bread, beef, cheese, Ink, &c., all got frozen; also our shoes and stockings, and Axes, and we are obliged to thaw them before they are any use. If Axes are not thawed they will split, or chips of the steel will come out. If we leave any water in pails in the house, (although the Fire is never out all night) it is one lump of Ice in the morning. But notwithstanding all this, never except on the morning before alluded to, have I felt very uncomfortably cold.

I was sorry to hear of John Clark's accident, but trust he has now recovered from it.

As to what I said in my last letter about getting more land I hear that Gartshore intends to put up a Saw Mill on his lot. If this is really the case of course I cannot do as I formerly proposed ; but I shall soon know ; and I am now aware that Mr. Valentine, to whom I have spoken on the subject, would exchange in the manner I mentioned to you, except that he would wish to keep the part of the Lot (about Twenty acres) on the north side of the Irvine ; for which he would give me an equivalent. In case, however, I shouldn't get this, (as Mr. Fergusson thinks that there would be no fear but my present lot would sell, even after there is a clearance on it) I am thinking of looking at Lots 3 and 4 in the 14th Concession, which though pretty far off, wouldn't be very objectionable if Gartshore had his Saw Mill up on the Esk ; and that stream running through them, I have little doubt but they will be good. Mr. Fergusson had formerly been thinking of McDonald's Lots for me, which you will observe, are Nos. 12 and 13 in the 2nd Concession, and quite close to Fergus ; but there is, I think, a great objection to these, altho' McD. wants to clear out. This is that Col. Clark, who died a short time ago, the Proprietor, altho' he has left an immense property, has left his affairs in terrible disorder. McD. has never paid a farthing on his land ; of course he has forfeited his right, and at present Mr. F. says it wouldn't be safe to treat with him about them. There are ten acres cleared and a fine creek on the Lots.

I suppose before this you will have heard of poor Melvin's death, which happened on the 26th of last month. He was buried at Fergus on the 1st of Dec. His new house was almost if not altogether finished, but I believe he had not got into it, but died in the shanty. This is now the third burial there had been at Fergus, Mr. Allan's child, and a journeyman millwright being the other two. You will see by my Plans that a man of the name of Tytler has the adjoining land to Melvin's. I happened to meet him a short time ago, when he told me that he used to live in Milne's house on the Waterside at the corner of our gate. I believe he is a mason.

As I have not been chopping yet myself, you will be asking how my choppers are coming on. They put up a shanty and worked for about a fortnight, but they have been away for some time, and it was only the other day that I heard that they are working just now for my neighbor, Mr. Walker. By the by, a brother of Mr. Walker's, by name Alexander, has taken the half nearest the 15th Concession of the Lot, below his brother's.

Mr. Fergusson came up to the St. Andrew's dinner with his son, Neil, and went down again two days after. He and the rest of the family are quite well, except Mrs. F. who had a bad cold at the time. The Dinner to which we sat down at four o'clock on the 30th of Nov. was excellent, and we had a most pleasant evening. Mr. Fergusson discharged most excellently the duty of chairman, and we had many

capital songs. Among these were two or three originals, by a young man of the name of Crichton, who comes from the Carse of Gowrie. He has two lots of land in Nichol, and is chopping just now for Mr. Valentine here. Mr. Fergusson took copies afterwards of two of his songs, and as one of them appeared in the Dundas Weekly Post of the 9th Dec., I suppose that Mr. F. had inserted the paragraph, which was as follows :

“Village of Fergus. The national festival of St. Andrew was celebrated upon the 30th ult., at Fergus, in Nichol, in the happiest style. A party of Forty Settlers met at Dinner in the St. Andrew's Tavern where Mr. Black regaled them with every dish peculiar to the taste of Scotland, followed by due libations of the favorite Barley Bree.” Mr. Fergusson as perpetual President, filled the Chair, and George Wilson Esq., of Harvey Cottage, V. P., acted as Croupier, Messrs. Webster and Buist ably assisting as Stewards. Native humor was displayed in many a sally, while some ventured even to put forth an attempt at song. Take as a sample the graphic, though sufficiently homely picture of the village, to the tune of “Auld Lang Syne.”

FERGUS MILL

I.

If you my friends would but look back
Out owre the twa past year ;
'Bout Fergus folks began to crack,
But fient an inch was clear.

II.

We've now a Tavern, Kirk and School,
A store and nine Trades too,
Auld Walker has begun to bake,
And Hornby soon will brew.

III.

Reek rises frae a score o' lums,
We boast a rifle corps,
Of a' dimensions, mettles, shapes,
In number nigh twa score.

IV.

A Tailor and a Blacksmith's shop,
Saw, Grist, and Parritch Mill,
Ay, that's your sort, my country lads,
We'll a' get Brose, our fill !

V.

Then Scotchmen surely may feel proud,
 And glory in the name ;
 Their ancient Scottish fare revives,
 Four thousand miles frae hame.

VI.

Then come, my boys, afore we sit,
 I'll crave one bumper more,
 To drink the health if you'll permit,
 Of Mitchell and Gartshore. "

VII.

For "Auld Lang Syne, my Lads,
 For auld Lang Syne ;
 Nor friends, nor Bannocks may they want
 Till they forget Lang Syne."

" Tenants of the Saw and Grist-Mill.

You will be glad to hear that Mr. Fergusson has been asked by the Settlers to a dinner to be given by them on the 1st January, in testimony of their approbation of his conduct in all he has done for this place ; more especially in the erection of a Church, School-house, Mills, &c. He has accepted of the Invitation ; Mr. Buist being the First Settler is to preside. It will be highly gratifying to him, and no more than he deserves. Give my kindest love to my dear mamma, brothers and sisters. Tell Jamie how glad I was to hear of his activity in the mornings. My kind love also to Aunt Jessie, Miss Morrison and my other friends. May God bless one and all of you is the earnest prayer of, my Dear Father, your very affect. and dutiful son,

Axr. Dingwall Fordyce.

LETTER NO. IV.

To Alex. D. F., of Brucklay.

Belleside, Fergus Civ. 19 Nov., 1846

My Dear Cousin,—

I have been long in your debt in the epistolary way, but have always delayed writing till a matter struck me, which I thought might count on your friendly disposition as my excuse for mentioning. We want very much just now some charitable individual to assist us by raising a matter of £50 for the purpose of seating and doing some necessary repairs to our Church here : but I do not think I need ask your assistance in that way, although it would be of great service.

What I think you will not object to do for me requires some little explanation. You do not need to be told that our Canadian Synod split in 1844, and that the Fergus Clergyman, Mr. Smellie, joined the party which attached themselves to the Free Church of Scotland ; that he had with him the greater part of his old congregation ; but that we were not of the number of those who continued with him. It is unnecessary to open old sores without a prospect of doing thereby some good : so that I shall just mention that while on PRINCIPLE I disapprove of the Secession, I could not avoid seeing that those who joined it would be placed in very great difficulties from the expense of getting accommodation for themselves ; and I took a step which I was well aware would by our own party have been considered a stretch of liberality quite unwarranted in one holding that there ought to have been no division, and that I was even thereby lending a hand to encourage it. I wrote to a friend, or one who was once so, and who, I was aware, had means at command and had used them on former occasions in a similar manner, (I mean Mrs. Arthur D. Fordyce) and stating the circumstances, suggested the idea of a contribution for the purpose of erecting a Free Church and Manse here. I did not disguise my own sentiments regarding it ; but urged the matter strongly as one calculated to benefit those who, while differing from them I believe were, some of them conscientiously, and others ignorantly, bringing themselves into great pecuniary difficulties. At this time the Seceding party were keeping possession of the property, refusing to give it up, merely, I believe, on account of the inconvenience it would cause themselves ; and determining to hold it as long as they could.

My communications certainly came from rather an equivocal quarter to carry all the weight I would have wished ; but I did think

it POSSIBLE it might be successful. However, no answer was received to it, and I went across, as you know, to pay my friends in Scotland a visit, when I thought I might hear something of the fate of my application. I made two ineffectual attempts to see Mrs. Fordyce, and immediately before leaving Scotland wrote her again, and earnestly requesting that if she could do no more, at all events to give me a YEA or NAY answer, so that I might be put out of doubt. To THIS I received no answer; and on arriving here a year ago I found that proceedings had been taken for the purpose of getting possession of the Church Property for our party; that the Seceding party had been allowed to have the use of them for six months, or so long as we were without a Minister; that they were accordingly still occupying them, but taking measures for commencing to erect in Spring a Church and Manse for themselves, for which purpose Mr. Fergusson had given them a site and Ten acres of Land, as well as commenced this Subscription List with £25. They went on getting NAMES, and I am not able to say what amount was subscribed, but at all events in May last they began building, and the Manse is, I believe, now almost habitable, and the Church Walls up, but not yet seated. I may at the same time mention that after my Mother's lamented death my Father gave them £10; partly on account of the strong attachment of my brother ARTHUR to the Free Church, and that my Mother also had some leaning that way. I am aware that they have already experienced difficulty in collecting their subscriptions, and that several of their largest amounts are from individuals who, during the ensuing winter, will be pressed from other quarters. Perhaps it is only right that people should suffer for coming under engagements without a probability of being able to fulfil them; but I can FEEL for people carried away by their FEELINGS on such an occasion; and I do not know that had I seen the propriety of the separation I should not have been equally injudicious.

But you will very naturally ask what all this long PALAVER tends to,—and it is to ask you to see that the enclosure finds its destination; as from no answer having been received to the two former, I am not CERTAIN that they were received, and sometimes it is said the Third trial succeeds. At all events it can do no harm, and formerly it might have been said that our Free Church friends here, would not have the property taken from them, and so not be under the necessity of seeking another location. Although it may look strange in me to trouble myself about the matter, when I believe they brought themselves into difficulties without adequate cause, yet I do believe there was a conscientious feeling with some parties in the matter, altho' an erroneous one, and as they hold the same doctrines with ourselves, I can conscientiously bid them God speed in the real object of the Christian ministry; and I do not think that a donation from those who can afford the sacrifice would be misplaced.

We are in great hopes of being able to occupy ourselves our own

Church and Manse permanently in a very short time, as we have given a Call to the Reverend Mr. Dyer, who was with us on the last Sundays and is a most talented man, to be so without having had the benefit of a regular Classical Education. Thoroughly acquainted with the Bible, sound in the faith, most fluent and impressive in discourse and especially in prayer, we enjoyed very much the short time he was with us. Never losing an opportunity of bringing forward the most important subjects, and exceedingly instructive in the way he treats them, I wish you could only hear them, especially as in some respects, you would have the advantage of us Landsmen, for Mr. Dyer draws many illustrations from the SEA, to which he was brought up, and to sailors above all others he has still a very warm feeling.

My father, since the month of June, has been in the practice of conducting the devotional exercises of the adherents of our Church here on the Sabbath mornings, meeting them in the Church an hour before Mr. Smellie's congregation assemble, and we not unfrequently remain; and we have occasionally had supplies of Ministers of our own Presbytery. Mr. Smellie's family are in great distress at present from the death of their eldest child, a boy between two Two and Three years old, two days ago, from Fever, terminating in disease of the Brain. I am happy that we are on friendly terms with them; and just now Elizabeth has been a good deal with Mrs. Smellie, whom she is very fond of and thinks highly of and who has always shown a great degree of attachment to us all. The child was buried this afternoon inside the New Church, as they do not intend having a Burying ground round it, although I believe it is proposed to have a new one, a little distance from the Village. As an instance of the footing on which we OLD and NEW lights can meet together, I may mention that at the Funeral my Father was requested to give a Prayer as none of Mr. Smellie's Elders, who were all present, would undertake to officiate, and he did so; and in many respects I am glad to think that there is a better spirit among us than formerly.

As to the long story I have given you about the Free Church, altho' you must have many claims on you, especially from the present distress from failure of the Potato crop; yet if you could do anything, I should only be too glad to be the channel of any contribution. And as to the Old Church, I must just trust to God's enabling us and giving us willing minds ourselves; but I should not like you to let go beyond yourself the mention of the Applications I have made to our friend at Blairgowrie, but merely to forward the enclosure to her safely—which I have left open in order that, if you choose, you may take a look of a sketch of the Free Church and Manse here, which I made the other day, and left the Letter to her without particular address, being uncertain if she still continued to reside at Blairgowrie.

COPY OF INCLOSURE

To Mrs. Arthur D. Fordyce

Fergus, Canada West, 21st November, 1846

My Dear Cousin,—

I take the liberty of enclosing a Sketch hurriedly taken from our office window in Fergus of the Free Church and Manse erected here during the last Summer in order to bring to your recollection that I last year appealed to your generosity in behalf of those who have now, by their own contributions, put up those buildings; and while I do so it is only in order to renew my request that out of your liberality you would still do something for them. You I daresay think [that] as WE, who are the only tie to Fergus you have, do not belong to that Church, you have no greater reason to bestow your generosity on this more than on many another destitute quarter; but altho' WE do not belong to the Free Church, we feel interested in its welfare; not indeed as an opposition Church, but as a true portion of the Universal Church of which I trust we are living members, and although I cannot deny that I feel warmer interest in the one I am myself attached to, it is one which, understanding your sentiments, I could not ask you to do anything for, however much I might wish it; and so I would desire to do what I can, through you, in relieving of difficulties [of] well-meaning Fellow Christians whom you believe to be contending for an important point, and consequently sympathize with. They have got good substantial stone edifices erected at considerable cost; but from what I can learn have very great difficulty in making up the amount they have cost; and in a merely benevolent point of view, I cannot but earnestly wish to see them in a flourishing condition, and now especially that there should be no hindrance to their being able EFFECTIVELY to go forth as an active and energetic, and by God's blessing, useful portion of the Church. You have perhaps not understood why, as a Member of the OLD Church, I should apply to you on behalf of the NEW one; but I trust you will now see that I can do it with perfect sincerity, and not on account of DENOMINATIONAL bias, withhold the boon which I am sure would be a real benefit to those of another communion. With kindest remembrances, based on old indelible associations connected with your memory, I am, Believe me, My Dear Cousin, Yours very affectionately

(Signed) Alex'd Dingwall Fordyce, Jun.