
CHAPTER VII

THE SCOTSMAN IN PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

*O little Isle down by the blue,
Where glad seas wander in between
Your balmy hills of pleasant green ;
Kind to the lonely folk were you,
The dour, lone folk from Inverie :—
They laid aside the targe and glaive,
They left the mountain and the glen
To climb the ever-mounting wave—
And show the world that Scots were men.*

IN 1758, Lord Rollo, a Scottish Peer, and a trusted colonel under Wolfe, captured Prince Edward Island, and as early as the year 1767 the island was parcelled out among a number of landed proprietors from the Old Land. Three of these, who were prominent as having established fisheries and having made other extensive improvements on the island, bore Scottish names, such as Spence, Muir, and Cathcart. Capt. Walker Patterson, another son of Southern Caledonia, and who was one of these proprietors, was appointed Governor, and arrived at the island in 1770.

In the following year Mr. John Stuart was

The Scotsman in Canada

appointed agent for the island in London by the House of Assembly. Another proprietor was Capt. Macdonald, who had much to do with the early affairs of the colony. At that period there were trouble and strife among the colonists concerning the lands, which continued for some years. In 1803 the successors to Stuart in London were William and Thomas Knox, two Scotsmen, and at the same time Messrs. McGowan, Stuart, and Macdonald were made members of a committee of five to draw up a new Bill for the province; showing that Scotsmen were the leading spirits in the affairs of the colony.

A Scottish chief who was prominently associated with the island was John Macdonald of Glenaladale, who purchased an extensive tract of land there, and conceived the idea of emigration of Highlanders on a large scale. He sent his brother, with an overseer and labourers, provided with all the requirements for farming for several hundred settlers, whom he shipped out soon afterwards. It is said that Macdonald's real object was to relieve the wants of his distressed clansmen and other Highlanders, whom the late Jacobite wars and other causes had impoverished. His emigrants were gathered from his own estates and from those of his cousin and chief, Clanronald, in Moydart; with others from the Island of Uist.

From this large immigration many descendants remain to this day. In 1843 there was estimated to be fully 24,000 people of Scottish descent in the island, and of these not less than 4,500 bore the

In Prince Edward Island

name of Macdonald. Capt. Macdonald of Glenaladale took a leading part in the life of the province. He refused the position of Governor, but, at the head of a portion of the 84th Regiment of Highland emigrants, he performed good service for the Crown. During the war of the Revolution an American man-of-war landed part of her crew on the Nova Scotian coast near where Glenaladale was stationed with a portion of his regiment. Capt. Macdonald, with a few men, captured this vessel and sailed her to Halifax, then returned with more men and captured the surprised crew of Americans and French. He died in 1811. Though a good Catholic, he was of a broad, tolerant nature, and made no difference because of the religion of his settlers or acquaintances. He left behind him a good record as a fine type of the old-time Highland military gentleman.

In 1803 another great Scottish immigration came to Prince Edward Island, when Lord Selkirk brought out about eight hundred Highlanders to occupy his lands. These people were located in the vicinity of Point Prim, and many of them made very successful inhabitants.

The earliest historian of the island colony was the Rev. John McGregor, who was a Scotsman by descent, but a native of the island. He gives a faithful description of its settlement and growth.

In 1813 Charles Douglas Smith became Governor, and the Receiver-General was John Edward Carmichael. At this period, says the historian, King's County, the most thickly populated district

The Scotsman in Canada

on the island, was inhabited by Highlanders, who spoke no other language than their native Gaelic. "They were men," he says, "who would have faced open fire in the field with the courage characteristic of the Celtic race, and had a profound respect for law."

During that period we find John McGregor, afterwards Member of Parliament for Glasgow, High Sheriff of the island.

In 1827 the membership of the House of Assembly included the following names of Scotsmen — Cameron, McAuley, Campbell, McNeill, Montgomery, and a Stuart was Speaker.

In 1830 Cobbett wrote thus flippantly of this colony as a home for emigrants. "From Glasgow," he says, "the sensible Scots are pouring out amain. Those that are poor and cannot pay their passage, or can rake together only a trifle, are going to a rascally heap of sand, rock, and swamp, called Prince Edward Island." Such were the views of this much over-rated man. But he knew even less of the island than he did of the Scotsmen who went there and made for themselves happy and comfortable homes in this veritable garden of the Canadian Gulf.

The late Col. Fraser also did much toward the colonisation of Prince Edward Island. Indeed, it can be seen that the greater part of its settlement was brought about by Scotsmen from Highlands and Lowlands. The result of all this was, that in 1841 the statistical returns showed natives of Scotland, 5,682 ; adherents to Church

In Prince Edward Island

of Scotland, 10,000 persons, and Presbyterians, 5,089, and nearly 20,429 Highland Roman Catholics.

So much for the Scottish settlements, and we may glance at some of the leading personages connected with Prince Edward Island who were of Scottish birth and extraction.

In 1834 there died John Stuart of Mount Stuart, aged seventy-six. He came to the island in 1778, and was Speaker of the Assembly for many years. This worthy old pioneer was a good friend to the inhabitants, and a dignified official. He took an interest in the early struggles of the people, and wrote a valuable book dealing with the island and its colonisation.

Another prominent personality was John McNeill, who did much for education. In 1837 he was appointed official visitor of schools, being the first appointment, and in his return he shows the number of schools to be 51, and the total of pupils, 1,533. He instituted important reforms in education, and, when he retired ten years later, there were over 120 schools and 5,000 scholars.

Walter Johnston, writing in 1824, says that the agriculture of the island was largely improved through the influence of the Lowland Scots from Perthshire and Dumfriesshire.

The Scotsman was also prominent in politics. In 1847, at the elections in the Belfast district for the Assembly, there were four candidates, all Scotsmen, as their names, Dowe, McLean, Little, and McDougal, will show.

The Scotsman in Canada

About this date, Sir Donald Campbell, of Dunstaffnage in Argyllshire, was sent out as Governor, and as a noted member of a distinguished Highland family, he received an enthusiastic welcome. He possessed all the qualities of a good Governor, but unfortunately died within a year of his appointment. The next Governor was Sir A. Bannerman, and later, in 1857, George Dundas, Esq., M.P. for Linlithgowshire, filled the position.

In 1859, there died at St. Dunstan's College, the Right Rev. Bernard Donald Macdonald, the Roman Catholic bishop. He had for years been a hard-working and faithful missionary among his people, and a worthy member of his famous clan. Another noted figure in the Roman communion was the Venerable Bishop McEachern, who came to the island in 1790, and was long a prominent personality in his own Church, and as a public man. One of his duties was that of Road Commissioner, and he had an earnest co-adjutor in the Rev. William Douglas, another worthy Scotsman of the Presbyterian fold. These two divines not only pointed the road to heaven, though by different theological paths, but also worked loyally together to promote good roads and highways on earth, in so far as Prince Edward Island was concerned. It seems that much evil has been done of late in thrusting the clergy out of public affairs and into mere ecclesiastical functions. This has had as one result to separate the Churches and deteriorate them as organisations for the community's good. What greater aid to religious union can there be than

In Prince Edward Island

where the leading divines of different communions work together on committees for the common good? They not only learn to know and respect each other, but it broadens and humanises their outlook, and gradually teaches them and their respective followers that in the best interests of all that pertains to the weal of the community, all religions are, or should be, one.

The Rev. Donald Macdonald, who died bewailed in 1867, was another venerable Scotsman, who as a Protestant missionary was known and beloved all over the island. He was a remarkable preacher and a fine scholar, and his funeral was said to have been the largest ever witnessed in the colony. The Rev. D. Kerr, who succeeded Dr. McCullough, became the leading representative of the Presbyterian Church. He, like many of his confrères of his day, was noted for his strong moral fibre and his great influence as a personality throughout the whole community.

That was the day of strong men in religion. They were scholars, statesmen, and rulers in their way. Since they have been driven out of public affairs, not only have the divines deteriorated, but the public men as a class have sadly declined and degenerated, and public spirit and opinion are almost dead.

Prince Edward Island has given its share of strong, useful, and brilliant men to the life of the Dominion. Among them are many of Scottish descent.

The most distinguished islander now living is

The Scotsman in Canada

Sir William Macdonald, the noted philanthropist and merchant prince of Montreal, whose career will be dealt with in another place, and who is a descendant and the representative of Macdonald of Glenaladale, one of the leading colonisers of the island. Another noted son of the island province is Dr. Falconer, President of Toronto University.

That the colony was, in its early foundation, largely Scottish, will be shown by a return of the inhabitants in 1798. Out of a list of 750 heads of families, 350 bore Scottish names, many of them being Highlanders. Thus it will be seen that the beautiful little island-province of the Gulf owes much to the daring and courage of Scottish navigators and colonisers from Sir William Alexander down, and that the character of its people is founded on the energy and high moral qualities of its Scottish settlers, who have done so much to give it the place it holds among the provinces of the Dominion.

Thus might the early islanders, the pioneer emigrants from the great British Island, have sung with the Poet Marvell—

What should we do but sing His praise,
Who led us through the watery maze
Unto an Isle so long unknown,
And yet far kinder than our own,
Where He the huge sea monsters wracks,
That lift the deep upon their backs? . . .
He lands us on a grassy stage,
Safe from the storms' and prelates' rage,
And on these rocks for us did frame
A temple where to sound His name.