

THE WOODSTOCK DISPATCH

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BISHOP PLESSIS' JOURNEY TO MADAWASKA IN 1812.

[No. 94.]

In the last few articles of this series will be seen that early travellers in New Brunswick were obliged to depend chiefly upon the rivers and streams as a means of communication and the description given of this mode of travelling by Capt Wm. Pote, John Mann and others shows that it was toilsome and even hazardous—especially to the unskilful canoeist.

We shall supplement what has already been submitted to the readers of THE DISPATCH, by quoting in this article from the journal of Monseigneur Joseph Octave Plessis, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Quebec, who made a visit to the lower provinces in the year 1812.

Having visited the settlements along the eastern coast of the province, and proceeding as far as Memramcook, the Bishop returned to the Bay of Chaleur with the design of proceeding, via the Restigouche and Grand rivers, to the Madawaska settlement. In his journal, which is of course written in French, the Bishop writes in the third person. His style is concise and pointed and a quaint vein of humor runs through it that makes it very entertaining reading. Some of his *bon-mots* lose much of their excellence in the English translation which is here given. "Madawaska, where the Bishop desired to go, being a country in dispute at this time between the English and Americans, it was not deemed prudent to venture there until he had been preceded by a judicious and intelligent person, capable of making due observation on arriving at the St. John river in order to ascertain if any hostile party should have appeared on the scene, and if so to advise the Bishop at once in order that he might turn back and take the route to Quebec via Metapedia river and lake whence by means of a long portage he would find his way to the river Metis which empties into the St. Lawrence between Matane and Rimouski. After consultation on Wednesday evening [Aug 31] it was decided that Abbe Painchaud should set out before day break next morning with two Indians and a canoe and make a forced march; should they perceive any signs of trouble on the river St. John they were forthwith to return and give information. But if all were quiet, as was more probable, they should in that event, send back provisions to the portage of Wahgensis and some canoes to carry the Bishop and his baggage to Madawaska. This they promised should be done by Saturday morning at six o'clock by which time the Bishop would have crossed that portage. In consequence of this arrangement the five other canoes were to be left at the beginning of the portage so that the Indians would have nothing else to do than to accompany the prelate and carry his effects.

Thursday, September 1.—*Jour du Sacerdote*—The Bishop, deprived not only of the satisfaction of celebrating this festival in one of the churches of his diocese, but also of opportunity to say the mass, consoled himself as he could before God in devotions frequently interfered with by the rain, which fell all the morning, and by the excellence of the salmon fishing, which caused more excitement than on other days amongst the canoeemen and passengers. At dinner time with the assistance of some *eau de vie* which remained, he was able to rejoice in spirit even in this remote situation with those of his clergy he supposed then assembled to conclude this entirely clerical festival by an Agape (or love feast). Meanwhile the river was becoming narrower and narrower assuring us we were approaching its source. All at once the canoes turned from it to take the Wahgensis a miserable stream encumbered with fallen trees and hidden for the distance of a league by branches that crossed from one bank to the other frequently striking the eyes of the travellers if they were not careful to guard them."

This account of the Wahgensis is in harmony with the description of the stream given by Mr. Geo. W. Hay in an article in the last Bulletin of the Natural History Society. Mr. Hay in company with Dr. W. F. Ganong went across from Madawaska to the Restigouche last summer on a tour of botanical and scientific investigation. Bishop Plessis continues his journal as follows:—

September 4.—At last despite all these hinderances, which the canoes overcame with difficulty, we arrived at the beginning of the portage a boggy bit of ground full of springs and moisture. At the place where the first bit of woods afforded a chance for camping we discovered a lizard which probably was not the only representative of his species. As there yet remained more than an hour before sundown the Bishop reminded the six Indians of their promise to plant a cross upon his route as a memorial of the journey. They plied the hatchet with such zeal that before night the cabin was complete and the cross prepared, planted and solemnly blessed.

After supper he distributed chaplets to them which was followed by their usual singing.

Sept. 5—This day we endeavoured to cross the portage. It was really only eight miles but we found it more than nine on account of the number of fallen trees which often necessitated long detours. Not infrequently two or three trees were encountered overturned one upon another. So much scrambling was necessary as to add greatly to the difficulty of the passage. The Bishop although provided with a staff, frequently was only prevented from falling by the care of his chaplain, and found himself excessively fatigued on his arrival at the other end of the portage, having occupied five hours and a half in crossing it.

Vainly did we look about us for the promised canoes from the river St. John. Nothing as yet appeared for the journey. Tired of waiting and anxious to propose something the Bishop, the next morning, assembled the Indians and expressed to them his anxiety on account of the great delay in the arrival of the canoes which led him to fear some accident must have happened M. Painchaud, usually so punctual. As provisions were failing both for them and himself he decided that the most vigorous of the band should return to Waghensis for a couple of canoes to continue the journey to the St. John river. There still remained for the prelate salted provisions for more than a day, but he was reduced to the last morsel of bread for himself and his two young companions; as for the Indians, who had in their possession on Thursday eighteen salmon of larger or smaller size, they had either devoured them all after their custom or left them at the other end of the portage. At any rate there only remained a duck for ten men and they had not yet breakfasted. In answer to the proposal the Indians said nothing, but five of them throwing aside their hats bound their heads with handkerchiefs and struck back into the woods. Questioned as to how long they required to go and return, they said they desired three hours. 'I give you five,' replied the bishop, which they considered very liberal. However eight hours passed by and they did not re-appear. The evening approached. The bishop had been thirty-one hours in a state of expectancy and his anxiety redoubled, when towards five o'clock a cry was heard from the adjoining stream. It heralded the arrival of some French Canadians from the river St. John with three small bark canoes and some refreshments. Their canoes were not sufficient to take all there was to transport; they took however the bishop and his servant and a part of his effects. The rest remained with M. Cote who was ordered to follow in the first canoe the Indians should bring across the portage. Of the two canoes sent for to carry the party to the St. John only one arrived, the other having been left in the woods because the strength of the Indians became exhausted. The bishop had only left the encampment about half an hour when M. Cote embarked; he rejoined him at 8 o'clock in the evening at the place (two leagues and a half distant from the portage) where he had encamped for the night and was awaiting him.

The cause of the annoying delay of the canoes expected at the Portage Saturday morning and which did not arrive until Sunday evening was this. M. Painchaud had never previously been over the route to Madawaska. Badly informed by the Indians, who do not understand distances and only reckon by the great or less time that it takes them to proceed—as for example *une journee* *une demi-journee*, etc., he was satisfied that from the farther side of the portage he had to go only about two leagues and a quarter by a river easy to travel in order to reach the St. John river. But the distance is nine or ten leagues and the route at first by a stream named *Cruisseau du portage* (or portage creek), encumbered with alders like the Waghensis, thence by Grand River (*la grand riviere*) where there were not less than seven portages, in addition to which it is much encumbered by large trees fallen across it and beaver houses and dams, and at this season the water is so low that the canoeemen and often the passengers make more of their journey by wading than in the canoes, all which circumstances helped greatly to prolong the route. Moreover the two Indians who accompanied Abbe Painchaud had inconceivable trouble in carrying their canoe over the portage and it was so broken in places that they had to spend more than half a day in gumming and repairing it before they again embarked. And thus instead of arriving at the river St. John on Friday, he reached there the next day at three in the afternoon, and the men he dispatched to meet the bishop not being aware he was without canoes loitered along the way surprised they did not meet him every instant.

Sept. 7th—The prelate did not delay to see with his own eyes what this *grande riviere* was like. Setting out on this day (Monday), there remained about seven leagues to travel, and although leaving his camping place at sun rise, he did not get to the river St. John until two in the afternoon. He was still six leagues from the Church of St. Basile, the patron saint of the parish of Madawaska. This distance was traversed by the party in six hours in nine canoes cleverly poled along by the inhabitants of the place."

Bishop Plessis' description of Madawaska will form the subject of another article. W. O. RAYMOND.

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The Good Queen.

On the anniversary of the Queen's birth, the Eastern Chronicle of Nova Scotia had the following article, appropriate just now:—

"On looking back over the past with its lights and shadows she can say with the psalmist, 'Goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life.' As a lady, a wife or a mother, she conducted herself always as to win the admiration of all, and the benediction of the good. As a Queen she has ruled wisely, justly and righteously. She has brought her virtues, her wisdom and piety to bear influence upon her court, and indirectly upon the nation.

Her court was pure, her life serene; God give her peace; her land reposed. A thousand claims to reverence closed In her, as mother, wife and Queen.

To quote from a writer,—"It is asked, Why is the British throne so stable? It is because the British Crown is so faithfully and grandly won. From her girlhood she has reigned for the girls of her kingdom; a mother with her sons, she has ruled for the boys. One of the united head of a family, she has seen her people, in the goodness of God, set in families; the mistress in a home, she has realized that the pure home is the strength of the State; a leader in society, she has felt that society must be incorrupt and incorruptible, and has done her best to make and keep it so. Her standards have been high, and they have been well enforced."

And because she has kept well her coronation oath; because she has admirably heeded the exhortations addressed to her on her coronation day, her reign has been unique in British history, the longest and most glorious. The prayers, then and since offered for her, have been answered.

Under Thy mighty wings, Keep her, O King of Kings; Answer her prayer; Till she shall hence remove Up to Thy courts above, To dwell in light and love, Evermore there."

Wedding Bells.

About forty invited guests met at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Shaw, Lower Wakefield, on Wednesday afternoon the 9th inst., for the purpose of celebrating the marriage of their daughter, Blanche, and Mr. Leonard McConchie, of Queens Co., at about eight o'clock. The bride wore a dress of white crepon with ribbon trimmings. Little Edna Haley acted as maid of honour to the bride. The officiating minister, Rev. C. T. Phillips, tied the nuptial knot, and the guests immediately repaired to the dining room, where they partook of a sumptuous repast; the remainder of the evening was spent in social converse and vocal and instrumental music, etc.

The bride received a number of useful presents among which were:—Parlor lamp, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Haley; berry dish, Mrs. Enoch Phillips; cream pitcher, Latin Grant; salt and pepper shaker, Sandy Shaw; fruit dish, Mr. and Mrs. Ziba Clark; tin tea-kettle, Mr. and Mrs. F. P. Sharp; fancy teapot and glass pickle dish, Mrs. Lizzie Birmingham; Patten, Maine; rose jar, Miss Alexa Shaw; one dozen napkins, Mr. and Mrs. Wellington Haley; one pair towels, Miss Lillian York; china cake plate, Frank Haley and mother; two pair towels, Mrs. Ambrose Haley, Houlton, Maine; silver and gold spoon-holder, Miss Lillian Gans and Charles Mackenzie; sugar shaker, Miss Martha Orchard; table cloth, Mr. and Mrs. William Hamilton; glass preserve dish, Mr. Charles Birmingham; pair cake plates, Mrs. Simon Grant; fancy tidy, Miss Martha Everett; sugar bowl and cream pitcher in silver stand, Mr. and Mrs. George Haley; tablecloth, half dozen napkins and silver mustard spoon, Mrs. (Dr.) Rankin; half dozen glass tumblers, Frank Birmingham.

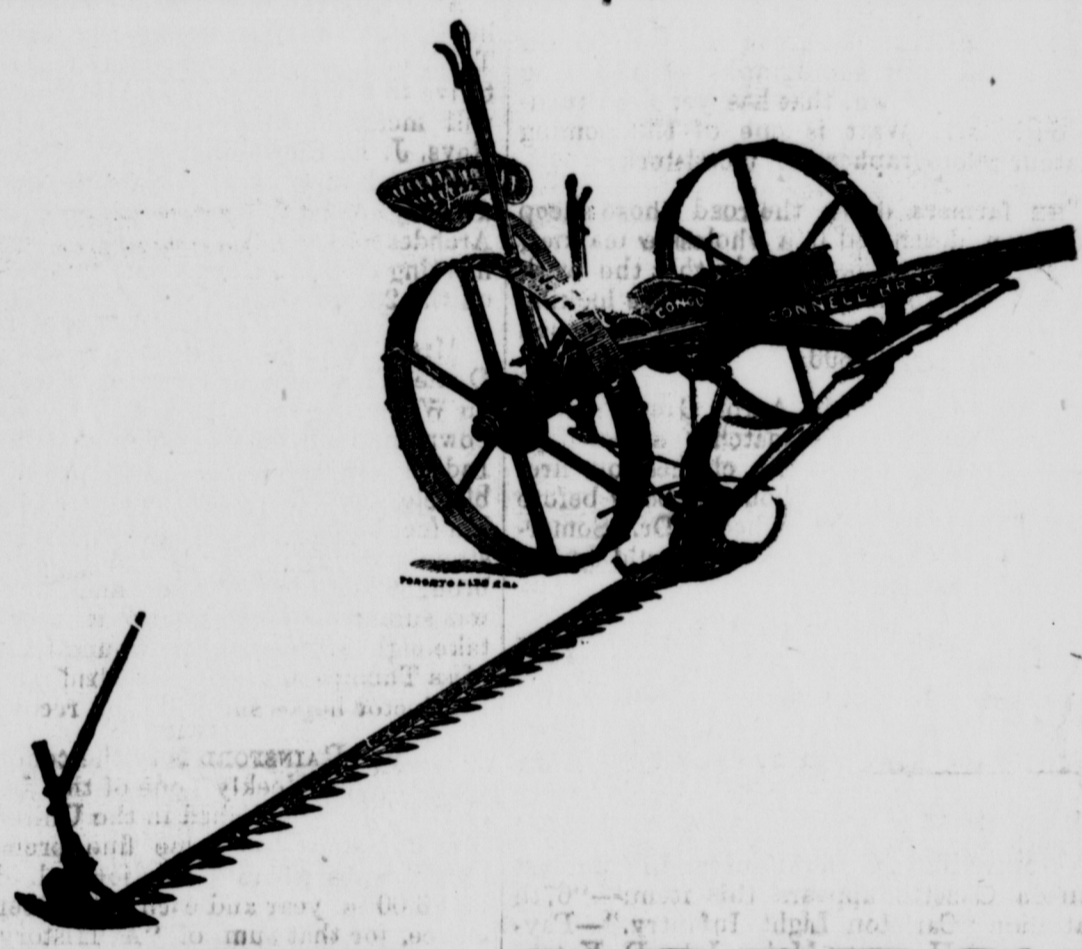
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AN ANTIDOTE FOR ASTHMA. Mr. Albert Keid, Angus, Ont., was for over two years a sufferer from Asthma. A half bottle of Yellow Oil cured him completely, and although that was some time ago, he has never yet been troubled with the same complaint.

Nansen's discovery of deep water in the Arctic ocean leads M. DeLapparent to infer that the Antarctic continent is of equal extent and has on it mountains of a height corresponding to Nansen's ocean soundings. From this he goes on to deduce the theory that the earth is top-shaped and spins, with the South pole for its point.

Not many business houses in these United States can boast of fifty years' standing. The business of Dr. J. C. Ayer & Co., Lowell, Mass., whose incomparable Sarsaparilla is known and used everywhere, has passed its half-centennial and was never so vigorous as at present.