

THE WOODSTOCK DISPATCH

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ADVENTURES IN NEW BRUNSWICK

Of John Mann, a Scotch Emigrant.

[No. 92.]

A small pamphlet entitled "Travels in North America, particularly in the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada and New Brunswick, etc.," was printed in Glasgow in 1824. It is one of the earliest publications dealing with New Brunswick affairs. The author, John Mann, was a native of Kenmore in Perthshire, who came to America in 1816 with the intention of settling in this province. He was a plain Scotchman and tells a plain unvarnished tale that in all probability is much more true to life than the more polished narrative of Sir George Head, from which some extracts have been given in this series of articles. The latter gentleman had a keen sense of the humorous and his desire to tell a good story evidently led him to caricature some very worthy individuals, including that brave old revolutionary officer Lieut. William Turner, the first magistrate and father of the settlement at the mouth of the Presquiere river.

About the year 1816, as the war with the United States was closing, there began that great emigration movement from the British Isles to the shores of America which during the next half century contributed so largely to the development of our own sparsely peopled province. Many of the emigrants had the most hazy and indefinite ideas with regard to the new world. America was to them a place like Ireland; if one had the good fortune to be landed anywhere on its shores he could surely he thought in a day or two find his old friends or relatives that had previously crossed the Atlantic. As an instance of this John Mann relates that in the month of September 1822, when he had set out from Quebec to go to Fredericton by way of the old route down the St. Lawrence and the St. John rivers, he overtook two Irishmen with their wives and two infants, who had lately arrived at Quebec and were travelling on foot to St. John, N. B., a distance of more than 400 miles. The two men carried their bedding upon their backs, the women carried the children and some kettles to cook their victuals. Upon being asked how they came to choose such a route they replied that having relatives living near St. John they could at the time of sailing find no passage except to Quebec. "But," said they, "we thought while in Ireland if we only landed any where on the other side of the Atlantic we would then be in the land of promise and could soon find out our relations." Any one who reads of the hardships and difficulties Mann himself met with on this same journey cannot but feel that a cruel wrong was done in allowing the unfortunate emigrants to St. John to take passage in a vessel bound to Quebec. How our Irish friends fared as they strove to find their way and make known their wants among the French "habitans" with whom they could communicate only by signs; how they crossed rivers and traversed rough woods and swamps; how when passing through long stretches of wilderness, where for miles and miles there was not a single settler's cabin, they managed to exist at all; how they escaped being lost in the woods or drowned in crossing fords or descending rapids—these are questions that must remain unanswered.

John Mann appears to have been a fair specimen of the better class of Scotch immigrants and his little pamphlet is of historic value, throwing light upon the subject of old world emigration in the early days of the century, a subject which forms an important chapter in the story of our provincial history. "I sailed from Port Glasgow," he says, "on the 22nd day of October, 1816, in the ship *Favourite* of St. John, N. B., bound for that place, with upwards of a hundred passengers chiefly from Perthshire. The ship was hired by the Governor of New Brunswick for the purpose of carrying Scotch settlers into that quarter, who had to procure proper certificates of their character, signed by the minister of their respective parishes and also by a Justice of the Peace."

The desire of the laboring classes to emigrate to America was so great that every ship had to be searched for "stowaways." The *Favourite* was searched in this way several times and despite all efforts a number of objectionable characters were discovered on board after the ship sailed. According to John Mann's account he and his fellow passengers were the victims of a trick—said to have been much in vogue with the masters of emigrant ships at that time. It consisted in providing the emigrants with an abundant supply of porridge and molasses. The Scotchmen partook of the same with a good appetite despite the warning of one of their number who had been at sea before and who said to them "You will cusse the molasses yet." When the ship began to roll the majority became so frightfully sea sick as from that time to loathe not only porridge and molasses but ship's provisions in general. All who could fall back upon their own private stock of

provisions for the remainder of the voyage did so much to the gratification of the Captain. The sailors proved a pretty rough lot. On one occasion desiring to procure liquor from the passengers they proposed that they should be shaven by old father Neptune as when "crossing the line." The emigrants, however, knowing this was not the custom in going to North America stoutly remonstrated and while the sailors were making ready gathered on the quarter deck. One among them cried out "Let us not forfeit to-day the renown the ancient Highlanders gained of old." Another pointing his dirk at the sailors said "If you proceed any farther I shall have some of your lives." By the efforts of the Captain a conflict was averted and the sailors abandoned their purpose. After nineteen days sailing, Sable Island was passed and two days later the ship reached the entrance of the Bay of Fundy where she remained two days in a thick fog. As soon as the fog cleared they got sight of Grand Manan and the wind being South west they had a good sun up the bay to Partridge Island. While anchored here some of the sailors went ashore and returned with liquor and in consequence there was a riot that night in which the captain would have been killed but for the interference of the passengers. The mate and four others in a small boat rowed to the light house built on Partridge Island, a signal was fired which was immediately answered by a gun from Fort Howe, and in less than half an hour two boats full of officers and soldiers from the garrison were alongside. The Mutineers were speedily arrested and four of the ringleaders placed in irons. Mr. Mann adds that at the trial "the captain was fined and the sailors liberated," which on the face of it appears a rather extraordinary proceeding.

Two years were spent by John Mann in Charlotte County, and he gives in his narrative many interesting particulars of his sojourn at St. George and St. Andrews, which however are not of sufficient interest to the readers of THE DISPATCH to be here dealt with.

Having been engaged as one of the exploring party under Hon. W. F. Odell in connection with the determination of the western boundary of the province, Mann for the first time visited the Upper St. John river country. He writes in his narrative:—"June 11th 1819, I sailed with the exploring party from St. Andrews for St. John. On landing there we were not a little surprised to see the whole city in an uproar, occasioned by a party of the West India Rangers, who being disbanded here were offered either so much land, or ten pounds in cash. A great part of them preferred the latter. Some of them were preparing for home and others for the United States. They threw off their regimentals and were furnishing themselves with other clothes." From Mann's narrative it appears that many of the old soldiers were not two hours ashore before they were intoxicated and began to act in the most absurd and prodigal fashion. One of them after purchasing a jacket and hat presented his purse to the merchant bidding him help himself, and when the overplus was handed back to him said, "What shall I do with the bloody dollars, come give me a silk handkerchief or something for them." Another who had a bundle of clothes requested a by stander to help him on with his burden and rewarded him with a dollar for his trouble. One can imagine with what astonishment such actions would be viewed by our "careful" Scotch immigrant. He adds in his narrative:—"Towards evening we could scarcely walk the streets with the crowds. One of them stood in the market place almost naked, challenging to fight any person that came in his way. He threw away his vest on the street which contained his money and would have lost the whole contentedly had not one of his companions who was a little more sober picked up the dollars which poured from the vest. At night the inhabitants were obliged to secure their doors sooner than usual on account of the rioters. This regiment consisted wholly of deserters and criminals of various characters who were sent into it instead of into banishment."

It would appear from the account given in the St. John City Gazette (see article 83 of this series) that Mr. Mann's description of the disorder attending the disbanding of the Royal West India Rangers is rather exaggerated. Old soldiers are much the same the world over, and no doubt there were some unseemly proceedings, but the regiment included many worthy men among its officers and non commissioned officers and was not without its better element amongst the rank and file. Those who agreed to become settlers in the province founded the well known Ranger Settlement in the County of Victoria where their descendants are numerous and respected.

W. O. RAYMOND.

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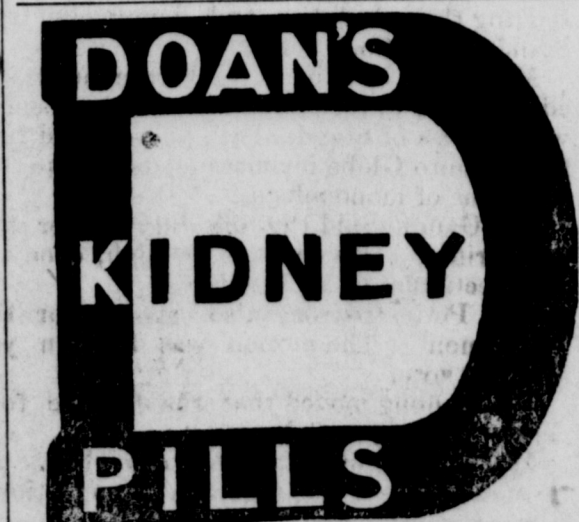
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Peterborough, Oct. 22, 1896.

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To strike a chord that will touch the heart is the best payment.

Let friendship creep gently to a height; if it rush to it, it will soon run itself out of breath.