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A Missionary Trek in Cape Breton From Rev. George Patterson's Memoir of the Rev. James MacGreaor. published in 1859

At this time there were not in iijim all of Cape Breton more than twenty Presbyterians. According to Rev. George Patterson, Rev. James MacGregor of Pictou determined to go to these people "principally at the solicitation of a pious woman, named Janet (Fordyce) Sutherland, who had emigrated with her husband (George) and family from the Highlands of Scotland (in 1788) , and who had for years mourned the loss of those religious privileges, which she had enjoyed in her native land. . . ." before we left Pictou. We agreed to take this short way, and he readily offered us his own oxen to haul our boat across to the Bras d'Or. "Next morning Mr. Kavanaugh directed his man to surround the boat with a strong rope, and hooked the oxen to it. He direct? ed two of my men, one on each side, to hold it on the keel, and his own man to drive the oxen and fetch them back. Thus in a very short time we were fairly launched on Lake Bras d'Or with a fine fair breeze. Rev. James MacGregor: "This summer I 'per? formed my long intended voyage to Cape Bre? ton, which proved very troublesome. I had waited in vain, .for years, for the opportu? nity of a passage thither. I, therefore, hired a good boat with three hands, and having laid in plenty of provisions and wa? ter, we set off. We had a pleasant sail till we reached Cape George, where we met the wind right ahead. There we anchored all night and part of next day, and then set off for the Gut of Canso, the wind being partly ahead. Next day we sailed pleasantly through the Gut, having a good view of the houses on both sides. I had a great desire to preach to them, but could not stay. We landed at one house which stood close to the shores, where I saw a bad woman, whom I had often exhorted in Pictou. I exhorted her, prayed, and gave her a tract. I could not but admire that Providence which sent me without my knowledge to visit and exhort that woman, about whom I had been much con? cerned in Pictou. She was very thankful. "That night we reached St. Peter's, where Mr. Kavanagh lodged us all with great kind ness and generosity. (Mr. Kavanagh was a Roman Catholic, and the first member of that persuasion, who ever sat in the Legis lature of the Province, Catholic emancipa? tion having been granted in Nova Sco? tia before it was in the mother country.) He informed us that our best way to Sydney (the metropolis of Cape Breton) was to haul (about a mile) overland to the Bras d'Or Lake (across "We had imagined that we would meet with a plain landing place at the other end of the lake, and a road leading from it toward Sydney. We took no thought to ask direction of Mr. Kavanagh. When we came so near the head of the lake that it was very narrow and shallow, our eyes were fixed on the shores looking for a landing place, but in vain. We heeled her on her side as far as we could, but had to stop before we could see any landing place or road. We hauled the boat as far ashore as possible, con? cealed the oars, rudder, and sail, under the bushes from thieves, and hung up our provisions as high as we could in trees, to preserve them from bears and other wild an? imals, and then composed ourselves for sleep, after worship, in the open air. "The next day being Sabbath, I was anxious to get up early, hoping to get to



town in time to preach. We got up with day light, and one of our company went back by the wa? ter side in quest of the road, and the oth? er went up the water side, now a moderate brook, with the same view. He returned in about an hour's time, informing us that he had found a good path, more than a mile farther up the brook. We could not conceive how a path was found so far up the brook, and none leading to it. We waited till the the piece of land that separated the Strait of Canso from the Bras d'Or Lakes. This was before the St. Peter's Canal was dug). and sail up the lake till we came to the head of its west ern branch, about forty miles off, and then walk to Sydney, which is little more than twenty miles off. 'This,' said he, 'is far shorter than sailing east along the coast of the island, and then working along the east coast till you come to the river, and then up the river to the town.' This was agreeable to the information received

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