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William Y. Porter & South Head Church By LeRoy Peach, Port Morien In the little Anglican church at South Head, over? looking the upper reaches of Morien Bay, there is In the chancel above the altar a magnificent window celebrating the life and witness of Wil? liam Young Porter, missionary extraordinaire. The window looks out on a little graveyard con? taining the stones of parishioners who once formed a Christ-affirming religious community in that part of Cape Breton • Clements, Peaches and Waddens and Boutiliers and Spencers and Murrants and Tuttys. Many of those buried there are the ancestors of present parishioners in the parish of Port Morien. The forest itself, mute and prolific, encroaches upon, and sometimes shrouds, the faded stones • some merely unlet? tered markers. Every July an anniversary service is held in this little church, opened in 1846 and closed to regular worship in 1970. This window was installed in 1878, almost thirty years after the untimely death of William Young Porter, a man who did more than any previous missionary to build up the church in southeast- l ern Cape Breton and define the boundaries of the parish of Port Mor? ien. Although the author has not been able to confirm the story, it has been said that the window is one of two copies, the other window having been installed in St. Paul's Cathedral. The reason is that the designer died in a shop fire shortly after its manufacture. It is a Ma? son window with an interesting black and white design on the perime? ter and a scene that appears to be from an Old Testament account. The window is noted particularly for its vivid colours reminiscent of the stained glass in York and Oxford Cathedrals. The man who inspired such devotion was a Yorkshireman. We first hear of W. Y. Porter in 1831, when he was thirty-five. In a letter of ap? plication which he made to the SPG (the Venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts) to become a schoolmas? ter at Sydney, Cape Breton, he indicated that he attended Queen's College, Cambridge, studying with a view to taking Holy Orders. He said that "circumstances, entirely of a domestic nature, rendered it necessary to withdraw my name from the university." We never learn what those domestic problems were. From the letter, we do learn that he studied medicine "upwards of six years." As we shall see later, his knowledge of medicine stood him in good stead during his ministra? tions to the community at Cow Bay. He told the SPG that he had tes? timonials which his father received from his college tutor. Obviously, his domestic problems were not such as to preclude his SOUTH HEAD CHURCH CONTINUES ON PAGE 52