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Book Review The Well-Watered Garden: The Presbyterian Church in Cape Breton 1798-1860 The Well-Watered Garden is an Important new book from University College of Cape Breton Press. And it should be said at the outset that this is a book for anyone interested in the history of Cape Breton. The title might put off a lot of readers, thinking the book a "church history" aimed at a limited audience, and that would be unfortunate. Because, while this book does centre on the planting of Free Church Presbyterianism, its real subject is the unifying, strengthening, and directing of the early Cape Breton settlers of Protestant faith. We read accounts of early Highland settlers facing forests, poor soil, and drought, of people passing the entire winter just keeping themselves covered and in fuel. Then we look at those stone piles, the cleared land, the demands of the sea • and we ask, "How did they do it?" This book gives us some of the clues. What we know of the living conditions of the early Protestant settlers in Cape Breton (which cannot have been that much different from the Catholic settlers) comes to us largely from letters sent back to Scotland from ministers and teachers sent out by the Edinburgh Ladies' Association. They came in among a generally dispirited, leaderless people. They brought with them a revitalized faith that had established itself in Scotland after most of these emigrants had left. And the success of their mission can be seen when we realize that the very tint and texture of so much that we think of as being "Cape Breton" are aspects of ways of thinking and social conduct that these men brought. I am informed by Dr. Robert Morgan that an excellent case can be made for the argument that those same modes of thought and conduct, born in Scotland and implanted here by missionaries and catechists and teachers, not only took firm root in Cape Breton, but were carried in? to the wider world by the Scottish Presbyterian dispersion from Nova Scotia, expressing itself in social thought and law we today consider essentially Canadian. Laurie Stanley does not take all these leaps in her book, but the implications are there. She offers us the very best telling to date of the coming of those missionaries to Cape Breton, of the society that sent them out, and of the extraordinary Isabella Mackay, whose devotion, tenacity, and money controlled the entire event. "I am bent," she wrote, "on living to see Cape Breton a well-watered garden." And of her, Ms. Stanley writes: "She wanted to direct the lives of householders in the island, to press upon them the acceptance of the Bible, not merely as a register of births, baptisms, marriages and deaths, but as the medium for daily worship.... She wanted no lukewarm 'Moderates,' no cold moralists, no dreary dogmatists, no sedentary preachers.... By the early 1850's, Mrs. Mackay had provided the scaffolding and framework for the whole edifice of Presbyterianism in Cape Breton." Her mission staff included names of men still cherished in communities nearly 150 years later: among them Reverends Alexander Farquharson, John Frazer, Murdoch Stewart, John Gunn, Hugh McLeod, and the teacher Alexander Munro. Isabella Mackay emerges for us as one of the most important shapers of what we know as Cape Breton. And Ms. Stanley's

research indicates that the truth of her activities is even more powerful than our traditions about them. For instance, George Patterson, in his History of Victoria County, says that while she lived, the Ladies' Society was active, and after her death its support work quickly declined. Ms. Stanley tells us that when she turned away to other concerns, Presbyterianism was firmly planted in Cape Breton, the communities maintained a college that produced local ministers, and there was no longer need of foreign support. Ms. Stanley has done a good job of research and writing. The book is solid with information and the source of further study. Her writing is lively and lean. Rev. Norman McLeod, who was not sent out by the Ladies' Association and who was antagonistic toward their ministers and teachers, emerges here in a portrait told with compassion and detailed clarity, that our traditional story has long needed. Ms. Stanley conveys to us real excitement about the concept of "the Men," some of them local, some of them long-haired and wandering, all of them passionate litmus in whatever parish or community they entered. They were so powerful • a power that came solely from the depth of their faith and their capacity to express it • a day of the Communion service was taken out of the hands of the minister and put under their control. And we are reminded of the Communion themselves • five-day long enormous gatherings • wherein the community was united, cleansed, humbled, and revitalized. This is a book about Cape Breton roots. It deserves a wide readership. **THE WELL-WATERED GARDEN: THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CAPE BRETON, 1798-1869** by Laurie Stanley. University College of Cape Breton Press. \$14.50. Inghams United Ltd. 213 Commercial St., North Sydney, N. S. B2A 1B5 Telephone 794-4536 **GENERAL DEALERS** Clothing for the Whole Family **INTERNAV** A Complete Line of Loran C Receivers for All Boatsmen Sydport Industrial Park, Point Edward 564-2043 **Cape Breton Mental Health Centre** Main Location: 1st Floor, Cape Breton Hospital, Sydney River **Satellite Clinics** Serve These Areas: North Sydney, Glace Bay, New Waterford, Neil's Harbour, Ingonish, Cheticamp, Baddeck, St. Peter's **Services:** Psychotherapy, Individual Counselling, Marriage & Family Counselling, Group Therapy, Consultation to Agencies, Schools, etc.. Drug Therapy, Forensic Assessment, Psychological Testing, Parenting, Children's Services Referrals accepted from all sources. You can even refer yourself. Please Call 562-3202 or 562-3110 or 562-3333 (35)