

appear in the sequel, his placing me in relation with his friend Sir Edmund Head, had an important influence on my later life. In regard to local researches, his interest in the relations of the different members of the carboniferous system, led me to study these with care, and to prepare a series of papers on them. Our finding of reptilian remains in the interior of the erect trunk of a fossil tree at the South Joggins, led to an important series of discoveries. He entered, too, with zeal into my work on Devonian plants, and into those investigations of the fossils of the Laurentian limestones, in which, after my removal to Montreal, I was engaged, in connection with Logan, Carpenter, and Hunt.

With the memory of Sir Charles I must cherish that of his highly-gifted wife, a worthy helpmate for such a man,—who won the affection of all his friends by her geniality and true-heartedness, whilst in some departments of natural science she had attained a mastery that ensured respect, and enabled her to render important aid to her husband.

CHAPTER IV

MARRIAGE

BEFORE going further with these reminiscences it will be necessary to refer to an event which, in many respects, one is justified in regarding as the most important of all—namely, my marriage.

It was on my first visit to Edinburgh that I became acquainted with my future partner in life, and before long I came to regard her as one who, if I could but win her to share my lot, would at once assure my domestic happiness, and would afford a stimulus and incentive to fight well the battle of life. Truly, to love worthily a good woman is the first feeling that raises a youth to real manhood; and to win the love of such an one in return is to attain to the highest happiness that the world can bestow.

The Mercers were of an old Scotch family, resident at that time in Edinburgh, and it was to Margaret, the youngest daughter of the house, that my affections went out. It was

not, however, possible that my hopes and wishes could immediately be realised. I had barely attained my majority, and was as yet but a student. She, too, was little more than a girl, and had not at the time completed her education. I had ample opportunities of cultivating her acquaintance, but no word of love was spoken between us, and when I said good-bye to Edinburgh for the time, all I asked of her was that she would answer such letters as I might find opportunity to send from Nova Scotia. Our correspondence only deepened my feeling of attachment, and at length when I had to a certain extent assured my position and prospects, I ventured to ask her to marry me. It may be that I acted unwisely, and I certainly received a most emphatic rebuke, backed by reasons sufficiently cogent to have deterred, if not to have convinced, any one less interested and determined. It only remained to apologise for too great precipitance, and to wait until the opportunity offered, some years later, of pleading my cause in person,—this time with better success.

I felt deeply then, and I still feel now, that the circumstances surrounding our marriage imposed upon me an unusual degree of responsibility. My young wife had to leave a

large and attached circle of friends and relations, a city second to few in its privileges and advantages, and had to cross an unknown sea, and to enter on the new and untried conditions of a young and comparatively crude country, with none but strange faces around her. A man in such a case, may well distrust his powers of fulfilling the duties and responsibilities he has undertaken, but will have, at least, the strongest incentive, to justify to the full the faith placed in him. In our case, we both had a higher faith in a God who does not desert those who put their trust in Him, and went forth determined to keep ourselves "unspotted from the world," as well as to use all opportunities for good that might come in our way. Our union was one of mutual affection, esteem and respect, and it has been, I believe, wholly a blessing to us both. To me it has been the crowning joy of my life. My dear wife has not only been all that I could have wished for myself, but has also proved herself fitted to adorn every position in which we have been placed, while to her wisdom and affectionate aid, I am justified in attributing a large share of anything I have been able to achieve, as well as of any measure of success I have been enabled to attain in

life. We have been blessed with six children, one of whom has "gone before" into the Master's presence. The others have left us, at different times, to launch out into the world on their own account. It is only just to say, that if they have been able to do credit to us and to themselves, this is mainly due to the wise and loving influence of their mother.

Through the goodness of God, we were able, fifty years later, to celebrate in Montreal, our golden wedding, in March 1897, surrounded by our children and grandchildren, as well as by numerous kind and sympathetic friends.

My voyage to Scotland in 1846 was not without incident. Although the Cunard steamers were already running successfully across the Atlantic from Halifax, passengers from other seaports in Nova Scotia frequently went by sailing ship, when time was not an important consideration. I took passage in a fine large ship, sailing from Pictou to Glasgow, in November, when a short voyage might be anticipated. We expected to pass through the Strait of Canso, where we were to drop our pilot and a passenger, but a fierce southerly storm set in, drove us from our course, and forced us to pass to the north of Cape Breton

Island. It thus happened that no letters could be sent ashore, and my parents in Pictou were left in entire uncertainty as to what had befallen me, until after my arrival in Scotland and the return of the mails. In the meantime, news came from the Magdalen Islands that a large timber-laden ship, similar to that in which I had sailed, had been totally wrecked there, but as these islands were inaccessible during the winter months, no further details could be expected until the spring. My father, on learning this, at once wrote to Scotland telling our friends, of the misfortune which, as he thought, had overtaken us; so it happened that when I arrived in Scotland, after a somewhat long voyage, I appeared like a Jonah given up by the sea.

During the winter, my studies at the University of Edinburgh were resumed, my attention being directed particularly to the courses in natural science; and in the spring of 1847, I returned with my wife to Nova Scotia.