

HON. ALEXANDER McDOUGALL*

SIR JOSEPH CHISHOLM

IT may be asked with some reason why I should make this man, who passed away four score years ago and whose very name and public service are now almost forgotten, the subject of a paper to be read before this Society. My answer is that it is the principal object of the Society to collect and preserve for those that come after us all the available materials of our history; to assemble and publish information concerning the Province and those men who in other days took part in the administration of its affairs. Mr. McDougall filled important public positions in Nova Scotia. He was elected to the House of Assembly at a critical period in our history. He was a supporter and personal friend of Joseph Howe in the struggle for the reform of our Constitution. He sat in the Legislative Council for many years, and was for a time the Solicitor-General of the Province. If he is unknown to the people of the present generation, he shares that fate with many a greater man. "When he is dead, he will be speedily forgotten", said Carlyle of Brougham. This prediction suffers from over-emphasis, but it illustrates the general tendency. If Mr. McDougall is well-nigh forgotten, it is now fitting to revive some memory of him. Again, my interest in him is stimulated by the fact that he represented my native county in the Legislature, and he practised his profession there. Add to that, his fine intellectual culture, and we have a man whose career must interest a large section of our people.

Alexander McDougall was born in Halifax on February 4th, 1804. His parents were Alexander McDougall, Sr., (born March 17th, 1765) and Catherine Buchanan (born February 23rd, 1773), who were married in St. Ninian's parish in the outskirts of Stirling and near Bannockburn on April 22nd, 1790, and who came to Halifax on August 6th, 1795, with two children born in Scotland. The parents lived for a short time in Brunswick Street, and then Mr. McDougall built a brick house on the corner of Argyle and Duke Streets, on premises now covered by the extensive establishment of Moirs Limited. Mr. McDougall lived and did business as an importer and merchant on that site, and there Alexander, Jr., was born. A daughter—Margaret Ann McDougall—married James Duffus on October 25th, 1818; and another daughter—Catherine

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McDougall—married William Duffus, a brother of the said James, on April 27th, 1825. Descendants of these unions have been and still are well-known and highly respected citizens of Halifax. Of the eleven children of Alexander McDougall, Sr., only one son and three daughters attained their majority. One daughter, Isobel, never married.

Young Alexander received his primary education in a school conducted by the Rev. John Farquerson. He remained under Mr. Farquerson's tuition until he was thirteen years of age. He was then sent to the Pictou Academy, the principal of which was the noted Dr. Thomas McCulloch, who had as an assistant the Rev. John McKinlay. One can readily understand how under such able teachers a bright young student of scholarly tastes laid the foundation of his extensive literary acquirements. Beamish Murdoch in his *History of Nova Scotia* (Vol. 3, pp. 487-8) speaks of him as a distinguished scholar of the Pictou Academy. Finishing in the Academy, he began the study of law. He read law in the chambers of William Q. Sawers, who later became the Chief Justice of the Inferior Court of Common Pleas, Eastern Division, and President of the Courts of Session in that Division. Mr. McDougall was admitted as an attorney-at-law on January 19th, 1825, and on January 24th, 1826, as a barrister-at-law; the requirement at that time being that a lawyer must be an attorney for at least one year before he became eligible to be admitted to the Bar.

In 1825, Mr. McDougall settled in Antigonish. At first the field appeared to him very uninviting, and some of the letters which he wrote to members of his family and to friends were somewhat cheerless and petulant: they showed a tendency to hold up to ridicule the inhabitants of the community in which he was to make his living. In a short time his practice grew, and he was looked upon as a leading lawyer. Joseph Howe, whose acquaintance with McDougall began at Mr. Farquerson's school, has left this recollection of the young lawyer:

I lost sight of my friend McDougall, our occupations being so very different, till we met in Antigonish in the summer of 1829. The County of Sydney was a comparative wilderness in those days. The Highland emigration had set in, and it was indispensable to professional success that a man should be able to speak Gaelic (which he rapidly acquired under his friend and constant companion, Dr. Fraser, Catholic Bishop of Antigonish), have a fair knowledge of Blackstone, and own a copy of the Laws of the Province. His practice was large, and had he been like most of his profession, he should have become a rich man. But

times without number, when his clients were anxious to engage in litigation, he would strenuously advise them to settle their disputes quietly and avoid lawsuits.

At the hospitable board of R. N. Henry, Esq., the then Postmaster of Antigonish, I met four men, each differing in training, profession and character, but each in his own time sufficiently remarkable to make his society very attractive. These were Dr. Fraser, who became Catholic Bishop of the Diocese, Dr. McDonald, then in the full enjoyment of a large county practice, the Rev. Thomas Trotter, Presbyterian pastor of the village congregation, and our old friend Sandy McDougall. They were all Scotchmen or of Scotch descent, were fast friends and cronies. Each would stand up for his own Church or his own snuff box, but they would all stand up for old Scotland, and fight to prove a thistle more fragrant than a rose. I would have given a trifle to have seen and heard our four old friends once more chaffing each other in Latin, English, Greek, and Gaelic. With these four men I remained on terms of intimacy and friendship while they lived. Nothing impressed me so much as to hear questions of philosophy, of practical or abstract science, or of European politics, discussed in the county of Sydney with the keenest of logic and fullness of information scarcely met with in the capital.

The old county of Sydney at that time comprised what are now known as the counties of Antigonish and Guysborough. In 1836 the old county was divided into two counties known as Sydney and Guysborough, and each of the new counties was given two members, (Acts of 1836 Wm. IV, Ch. 79). By section 6 of the statute it was provided that a poll should be held in Dorchester (Antigonish) for a space of six days or until all the freeholders present should be polled. In 1836 a general election took place throughout the Province.

John Young, the author of the *Letters of Agricola*, and the father of Sir William Young, was elected for the county of Sydney in 1823, and continued to represent it until his death. By reason of the *Letters of Agricola* and his advocacy of improved methods of farming he was well-known and prominent in Nova Scotia. One would expect him to be sure of re-election in 1836; but as it turned out, there was a reaction of feeling in the county. These were the days of open voting; the polls were kept open from day to day until all the electors who desired to vote had polled their votes. The poll opened on Monday, December 5th, 1836, the candidates nominated being John Young, Alexander McDougall, James Wilkie

and John Sutherland. Two members were to be returned. At this time, as mentioned by Mr. Howe, the Right Reverend William Fraser, D.D., a man of strong character, was the Catholic Bishop of Nova Scotia and resided in Antigonish. On Monday evening the votes stood: McDougall, 248; Wilkie, 161; Young, 124; and Sutherland, 22. On Tuesday morning Sutherland retired in favour of Wilkie, and the outlook seemed ominous for Young. The situation on Tuesday was McDougall, 532; Wilkie, 350; and Young was at the foot of the poll, with 259 votes. On Wednesday there was a change, and Young gained ground. That evening the vote stood: McDougall, 650; Wilkie, 388; and Young, 354; Young being again at the foot of the poll. Wilkie perceived the change in favour of Young and addressed the electors, we are told, in very becoming terms. He stated that he was very anxious to avoid any ill-feeling that might arise in a peaceable community from a protracted contest; he begged to resign, and he retired from the hustings. This brought matters to a stand-still. The Sheriff, Mr. E. H. Harrington, then addressed the electors, and stated that notwithstanding that Mr. Wilkie desired to retire, yet as he had a substantial majority over Young, if the polling should then close, he, the sheriff, would be bound by the law to return Wilkie with McDougall. Wilkie then retracted his determination to resign, and the polling was resumed (*Nova Scotian*, December 22, 1836). On Wednesday evening the vote stood: McDougall, 734; Young, 432; and Wilkie, 401. Wilkie again expressed his desire to retire, and the sheriff closed the poll, the final vote being: McDougall, 736; Young, 734; and Wilkie, 404. It was stated in the press at the time, and we may take it as true, that Young's return was secured through the powerful influence of the beloved resident Bishop, whose sympathies were known to be in favour of the reform party and who was a personal friend of Mr. Young's. With a personal friendship there was a common interest between them in the advancement of the condition of the farmers of Nova Scotia.

Mr. McDougall, as you have noticed, was returned at the head of the poll. He was undoubtedly very popular. When he left Antigonish in January, 1837, to attend the session of the legislature, we are told by a correspondent of the *Nova Scotian* (February 2, 1837:—

A numerous cavalcade on sleighs escorted him some miles on his way. This mark of respect must be gratifying to his feelings, and is quite in accordance with his high standing on the poll-books at the election.

And the same correspondent continues:

The county places great confidence in his integrity, assiduity and abilities to promote their best interests in the Legislature, and he carries with him the sincere wishes of the whole people that his career may not only be beneficent to them, but also honourable and advantageous to himself.

It may be noted that Joseph Howe and he were born in the same year, and they were first elected to the House of Assembly in 1836. They had many things in common, and became warm friends. Of McDougall's work in the Assembly little or no record remains. There was at that time no official reporting of the speeches of members. The *Nova Scotian* newspaper, owned and edited by Mr. Howe, published his speeches *in extenso*; but whether they were written out in advance or taken down by a stenographer or written out from memory after they were delivered, I am unable to determine. At any rate I have not succeeded in discovering any report of the speeches of Mr. McDougall in the Assembly during the period in which he was one of its members. Howe, however, said this of the speeches: "He spoke seldom, but always to the purpose. His style was argumentative rather than declamatory; logical, sufficiently embellished without being over-laid with ornamentation".

In 1839 the *Acadian Recorder* had a number of "Legislative Portraits", depicting in four lines the distinctive characteristics of the several members of the Assembly. This is the portrayal of Mr. McDougall:

MCDUGALL

Professional fraternity
His politics cannot controul;
For uncorrupted, firm and free,
Is his poetic soul.

—*Nova Scotian*, October 17, 1839.

We should expect that a member so triumphantly returned in 1836 would secure an easy election in 1840. If he were of the pushful sort, no doubt he could make a vigorous and possibly a successful fight; but apparently he did not like the hurly-burly of the electoral contests of that day. To understand the situation as it developed, we must go back a few years. On October 5, 1837, his colleague, John Young, died, and the vacancy caused by his death had to be filled. The *Nova Scotian* of November 2, 1837, had the following editorial paragraph:

It will be perceived by a card in this day's paper that Richard J. Forrestall has offered himself as a candidate to represent the County of Sydney in the room of J. Young, Esq., deceased. We have not heard with any degree of certainty whether there will be any opposition. Mr. Forrestall is a young gentleman of liberal principles and amiable manners, connected by religion with the mass of the population, and by business and family ties with the leading interests of the county. Though he may not bring with him the knowledge and experience and eloquence to supply the place of the dead, we feel assured from what we know of him that he will, if elected, take his position on the side of the country, and maintain those principles which are essential to its prosperity and improvement.

Mr. Forrestall was in due course elected. He was the first Catholic to represent the county, the majority of the electors of which were, as the *Nova Scotian* stated, Catholics. He was a brother of Lady Kenny, the mother of the late Thomas E. Kenny who so long represented Halifax in the House of Commons at Ottawa; and a half-brother of William A. Henry, who became in turn Solicitor-General and Attorney-General of Nova Scotia, and finally a puisne judge of the Supreme Court of Canada at Ottawa.

In the general election of 1840 the expectation no doubt was that Mr. McDougall and Mr. Forrestall would be easily elected. So far as I can ascertain, Mr. McDougall was not nominated. He was a man of scholarly attainments, with the scholar's habits, and not of the type of politician who could readily mingle with the general mass of the people and be a hale-fellow-well-met. When the election was approaching, a younger, more aggressive and possibly more ambitious candidate stepped into the field. On the third of November, 1840, William Alexander Henry was admitted an attorney-at-law of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia. Ten days previously he issued to the electors of the county (*Nova Scotian*, October 22, 1840) a card asking them to support him, and pointing out among other things that he had resided among them from his earliest days. He was a half-brother of Mr. Forrestall, one of the late members, and he had a large and influential family connection in the county. With Henry and Forrestall joining their forces, the prospects of a third candidate looked unpromising. Henry and Forrestall were returned. I have not been able to find any official papers connected with this election, but I take for granted that Mr. McDougall stepped aside. The contest, had there been one, would have been bitter, and very distasteful to a man of Mr. McDougall's disposition. The result was that for a few years he was not in public life.

I shall now turn to another phase of his intellectual activity. There were several good periodicals published in Nova Scotia at this time. Mr. McDougall, however, sought a wider outlet for the productions of his ready pen. The year he entered the Legislature, Mr. Richard Bentley, the well-known London publisher, conceived the plan of establishing a high-class literary monthly, and at the beginning of 1837 *Bentley's Miscellany* was launched, with Charles Dickens as its first editor. *Oliver Twist* ran in this monthly as a serial, and the magazine soon became the leading magazine of its kind in the English-speaking world. Dickens was the editor of the first four volumes, and on his retirement he was succeeded by William Harrison Ainsworth, the well-known writer of historical romance. Mr. McDougall submitted a poem which was readily accepted. It was quite an interesting event to have a poem by a lawyer in a small Nova Scotia village appear in a magazine of the quality of *Bentley's*. This is it:

TO MY OLD COAT*

By Hon. Alexander McDougall.

Ah me! how oft my fancy plays
 Round the bright flame of other days,
 Ere poverty I knew,
 When, ere the light of hope was gone,
 "In pride of place" I put thee on,
 My Sunday-coat of blue!

'Twere vain to tell what fears arose,
 How I anticipated woes,
 When first thy shape I tried;
 But doubts dispelled, what joy was mine!
 I gazed upon thy superfine,
 And scorned all coats beside.

Can I forget that jovial night,
 When thy gilt buttons in the light
 Of matchless beauty shone;
 When, cheered by many a witching glance,
 I in the figure of the dance
 Exhibited my own?

These days of pride like meteors passed—
 Alas! they were too good to last,
 And dismal hours have come.
 Now, my poor coat! thy haggard air
 Speaks volumes to me, while despair
 Has almost struck me dumb.

**Bentley's Miscellany*: vol. V, p. 297 (March, 1839).

My other upper parts of dress,
 Though ancient, are exceptionless;
 With patching here and there,
 My nether garments still retain
 Cohesive power; but all in vain
 Thy breaches I repair.

Thy collar, which so lightly pressed
 In graceful sweep my swelling chest,
 Now makes my choler swell;
 The soap, perspiring through each stitch
 So tar-like, urges me to pitch
 Thee to the tailor's hell.*

Thy edges now are all unhemmed,
 Thy guiltless buttons, too, condemned,
 Hang in lack-lustre rows;
 Thy sleeves have faded from their prime,
 Thy cuffs, which met the storms of Time,
 Have sunk beneath its blows.

Thy seams which looked so smooth before
 ("Talk not to me of 'seems,' ") no more
 In evenness excel;
 While, shrinking from thy wearer's make,
 Thou, Wolsey-like, art forced to take
 Of greatness a farewell.

I dare not trust thy texture now—
 "A thing of shreds and patches,"—thou
 Art woeful to behold!
 Thy waist has fallen to waste at last;
 Thy skirts, whose threads are failing fast,
 A sad, sad tale unfold!

As on thy altered form I gaze,
 I mourn the joys of other days,
 Ere poverty I knew.
 When, ere the light of hope had gone,
 "In pride of place" I put thee on,
 My Sunday coat of blue!

Well might Mr. Howe remark: "Merit should be accorded to those who have stuck a flower here and there amidst the wild wilderness of our unpoetic provincial history".

*The Artists' repository for old rags, etc.

Then later appeared:

BALLAD¹

By Alexander M'Dougall, Esq., of Nova Scotia.

Oh come to me, my only love! the sun has sunk to rest,
His latest ray has faded from the lofty mountain's crest,
And, as if mourning for his flight, soft as the lover's sigh,
The night-breeze, while it fans my cheek, goes faintly murm'ring by.

Oh come to me, my only love! the moon is shining bright—
The stars that form her coronet are mellow'd by her light,
And soft and sweet her glances fall upon the open bay,
Where right the silver waters dance, and sparkle far away.

Oh come to me In safety come!—the tower is dark and lone—
No hostile sound shall there be heard, no voices save our own.
The stream that glides beneath the bank is flowing fast and free,
The bark that floats upon its tide is waiting, love, for thee.

Long have I had thy father's hate, and long endured his scorn,
And still in silence, for thy sake, I'd bear as I have borne;
But now, should fortune smile, I'll change, ere yonder moon decline,
The angry flashes of his eye for beams of love from thine.

The maiden came—the morning sun rose joyously and fair—
They sought her in the lonely tower—the maiden was not there—
But one small foot-print on the sand, one line upon the stone,
In haste engraved, sufficed to tell her Sire that she had flown.

Then followed later:

TO ELLEN²

By Alexander M'Dougall, Esq., of Nova Scotia.

Though thy bosom appear like the drifted snow,
There's a heart that can cherish a flame below.
Thy hair has its "Cupids in ev'ry curl",
And thy white, white teeth are like rows of pearl,
That shine in despite of thy coral lips;
And thine eyes are like stars in the moon's eclipse!

There's a charm on thy cheek, with its crimson dye;
There's a spell in the light of thy soft blue eye;
There's a thrilling touch on thy finger's tip,
And a magic dew on thy rosy lip;
While a potent pow'r, which I gladly own,
Exists in thy voice, with its silver tone!

1. *Bentley's Miscellany*, Vol. VIII, p. 32 (July, 1840).

2. *Bentley's Miscellany*: Vol. XIII, p. 134; Feb., 1843.

What joy is mine! When I fondly see
 The light of thy glance shining down on me,
 When thy fairy fingers I faintly press,
 Or woo thy cheek with a soft caress;
 While thy sweet voice, swell'd to its utmost stretch,
 Cries, "What are you arter? Get out, you wretch"

And then this clever quip:

ON A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY NOT REMARKABLE
 FOR HIS VERACITY¹

By Alexander M'Dougall, Esq. of Nova Scotia.

Brown promised, in terms that could not be withstood,
 If we gave him a seat, it should be for our good,
 Nor can we complain that he's alter'd his tone:
 He sits for our good, but—he lies for his own.

In 1844, the *Miscellany* had a song from Mr. McDougall:

SONG²

By Hon. Alexander M'Dougall.

Nay! take back the wreath, which you only bestowed
 When the reign of its beauty and splendour was o'er,
 When its fragrance was gone, and no longer it flow'd
 With the lustre that dazzled and charm'd us before.

The rose—ere the fierce beams of morning had cast
 Their glance on the dew-drops that linger'd so fair,
 Like pearls on the leaves—kiss'd thy cheek as she pass'd
 And left the last hues of her loveliness there.

And the lily, which still is so beauteous a wreck,
 Rear'd unblushing its head in the hour of its pride,
 And deem'd itself pure, till it glanced at thy neck,
 When, sighing with envy, it droop'd and it died.

Then take back the wreath, love! In sorrow I part;
 The flowers are all dead, and neglected they lie;
 Nought is left but the thorn which now pierces my heart,
 While the dew-drop is changed to the tear in my eye.

1. *Bentley's Miscellany*: Vol. XIII, p. 160 (Feb., 1843).
 2. *Bentley's Miscellany*: Vol. XIV, p. 306. (Sept. 1843).

In 1844 he published in *Bentley's** a fine narrative poem on the Battle of Hastings. When Bentley collected a number of the more famous ballads which appeared in his Monthly, he published a book called *Bentley's Ballads*, and Mr. McDougall's ballad was honoured with a place in the collection; and later it appeared anonymously in Volume VI of the Readers* *prescribed in 1865 by the Council of Public Instruction for use in the schools of Nova Scotia, page 135 et seq. As a school boy in the late seventies, many a time I had to declaim it. It is as follows:

THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS

Across the ocean's troubled breast
 The base-born Norman came,
 To win for his helm a kingly crest,
 For his sons a kingly name;
 And in his warlike band
 Came flashing, fair and free,
 The brightest swords of his father's land,
 With the pomp of its chivalry.

What doth the foe on England's field?
 Why seeks he England's throne?
 Has she no chiefs her arms to wield,
 No warrior of her own?
 But lo! in regal pride
 Stern Harold comes again,
 With the waving folds of his banner dyed
 In the blood of the hostile Dane.

The Song—the pray'r—the feast were o'er,
 The stars in Heav'n were pale,
 And many a brow was bared once more
 To meet the morning gale.
 At length the sun's bright ray
 Tinged the wide East with gold,
 And the misty veil of the morning grey
 Away from his forehead roll'd.

And all along each crowded track
 His burning glance was thrown,
 Till the polish'd armour sent him back
 A lustre like his own.
 Still flash'd his silver sheen
 Along the serried lines,
 Where the deadly wood of spears was seen,
 To rise like forest—PINES.

**Bentley's Miscellany*: Vol. XIV, p. 138 **A. & W. Mackinlay & Co., Halifax (Aug., 1843).

THE DALHOUSIE REVIEW

In either host was silence deep,
 Save the falchion's casual ring,
 When a sound arose like the first dread sweep
 Of the distant tempest's wing;
 Then burst the clamour out,
 Still madd'ning more and more,
 Till the air grew troubled with the shout,
 As it is at the thunder's roar.

And the war was roused by that fearful cry,
 And the hosts rush'd wildly on,
 Like clouds that sweep o'er the gloomy sky
 When summer days are gone.
 Swift as the lightning's flame
 The furious horsemen pass'd,
 And the rattling showers of arrows came
 Like hailstone on the blast.

The island phalanx firmly trod
 On paths all red with gore;
 For the blood of their bravest stain'd the sod
 They proudly spurn'd before.
 But close and closer still
 They plied them blow for blow,
 Till the deadly stroke of the Saxon bill
 Cut loose the Norman bow.

And the stubborn foemen turned to flee,
 With the Saxons on their rear,
 Like hounds when they lightly cross the lea
 To spring on the fallow-deer.
 Each war-axe gleaming bright
 Made havoc in its sway;
 But, in the mingled chase and flight,
 They lost their firm array.

From a mounted band of the Norman's best
 A vengeful cry arose,
 Their lances long were in the rest
 And they dash'd upon their foes
 On, on, in wild career;
 Alas for England, then,
 When the furious thrust of the horsemen's spear
 Bore back the Kentish men.

They bore them back, that desp'rate band,
Despite of helm or shield;
And the corslet bright and the gory brand
Lay strew'd on the battle-field.
Fierce flash'd the Norman's steel,
Though soil'd by many a stain,
And the iron-tread of his courser's heel
Crush'd down the prostrate slain.

But still for life the Saxons ply,
In hope, or in despair,
And their frantic leader's rallying-cry
Rings in the noontide air.
He toils, but toils in vain;
The fatal arrow flies,
The iron point has pierc'd his brain,
The island-monarch dies.

The fight is o'er and wide are spread
The sounds of the dismal tale;
And many a heart has quail'd with dread,
And many a cheek is pale.
The victor's fears are past,
The golden spoil is won,
And England's tears are flowing fast
In grief for England's Son.

These effusions were exhumed for me by a friend in the British Museum. Many of his poems never published exist and are in the possession of his granddaughter, Mrs. Lucy Wilson Woyke, some forty in number, and are soon to be published in book form. Some of them are on classical subjects, and have distinct merit. Mr. Howe says that Mr. McDougall "sung his own songs", and he "overflowed with good humor", and "was witty in himself and the cause of wit in others, often irresistible." He began writing poetry at an early age. *Pic-Nic* was written when he was seventeen. He composed songs for festive occasions, such as the meetings of the Charitable Irish Society and the North British Society, and he sang them himself.

Joseph Howe was a strong advocate of the formation of Mechanics' Institutes, and he saw his plan take form in the establishment of the Halifax Mechanics' Institute in 1832, when he delivered the inaugural address. In 1840 a similar organization was started in the little village of Antigonish, and I have a list of the lectures given in its second session—that of 1840-1841. It is as follows:

Rev. Thomas Leaver on Education;
 Edward H. Harrington on Building;
 Dr. William Currie on Vegetation;
 Charles Leaver on Agriculture;
 A. McDougall on Lyrical Poetry;
 G. A. Blanchard on Magnetism;
 A. McDougall on Lyrical Poetry, (second lecture);
 Dr. William Currie on Literature of Greece and Rome;
 Edward H. Harrington on Astronomy;
 Dr. Creed on Optics;
 Robert Grant on Origin and Progress of the Arts;
 Edward H. Harrington on Astronomy (second lecture);
 Mr. Macdonald on Calorics;
 Rev. Thomas Leaver on Manners and Customs of the East;
 Dr. William Currie on Modern Literature;
 John Stiles on Agriculture;
 G. A. Blanchard—Concluding address.

Mr. McDougall was one of the leading spirits in this ambitious and useful work. Dr. William Currie, writing from Antigonish, April 22nd, 1842, in the *Nova Scotian* of May 26th stated that seventeen lectures were given in the winter of 1841-42. He spoke of Antigonish as "a remote corner of the province, and at a great distance from the luminaries of the Capital".

To return to Mr. McDougall's public career: He stepped aside, as has been pointed out, in the election of 1840. His unselfish action stood him in good stead later. Howe did not forget it, or the unswerving support he continued to give the reform party despite the personal disappointment of 1840. In 1842 the opportunity came to make amends. A vacancy occurred in the Legislative Council, and Mr. Howe wrote to Mr. McDougall:

Halifax, Nov. 14, 1842.

Private.

My dear McDougall,

I am very anxious that you should be elevated to the Legislative Council where your talents would be useful to your country and ultimately to yourself. Will you do me the favor to say whether I am at liberty to mention your name to Lord Falkland, as one who would accept a seat? An early answer will much oblige

Yours truly,

Joseph Howe

Alex. McDougall, Esq.

To this letter Mr. McDougall made a characteristic reply:

Private.

Antigonish, Nov. 17, 1842.

My dear Howe,

I am a little excited by your kind note of the 14th inst.; and if in my hurried reply I should appear rather incoherent, pray pardon my expressions.

I know that the appointment which you suggest as probable would most mightily delight the Catholics of this County and the Catholic Bishop—aye! and every other sect and creed, with the exception of a few partizans of the Revd. Thomas Trotter. Still, would it not (and I write in a spirit of drollery which I cannot controul) appear rather ridiculous to have the appellation "Honorable" attached to my name?

But I am not coquettish about the matter; and I therefore answer that I shall accept your offer *if Lord Falkland thinks I am worthy of the position*: reminding you, however, that my conduct, if I be chosen, shall be characterized by the same fair, open, and liberal principles which, as a Member of the House of Assembly, I advocated, and which as a private individual, I do still advocate.

With every wish for your prosperity—with every wish that the measures which we, in conjunction with others, designed for the benefit of the country should be fairly accomplished,

I remain

Yours very truly

Alex. McDougall.

(Postscript)

I am hurried, and therefore after the manner of the ladies I must add a postscript. What do you think? I lately rec'd an invitation to offer for a sister county; but I refused, principally upon the ground that I could not desert my own countrymen who had so nobly supported me in my first and only election. With regard to the other point, respecting my elevation, take the maxim of Shakespeare

If when 'twere done 'twere done, then 'twere well

It were done quikly.

Write me by return of post.

A. McD.

Mr. Howe again wrote:

Private.

Dear Mac,

Write me a formal answer to the enclosed, and the business is done. I cannot describe to you the satisfaction it gives me to

be able to make this communication to an old companion in arms who stood by me in days of trial—and having served his country deserves to share her honors.

Yours sincerely

21 Novr.

Jos. Howe.

Mr. Howe then wrote:

Halifax, Novr. 22, 1842.

My dear McDougall,

Since the receipt of your note, I have communicated with Lord Falkland, to whom your standing, claims and talents were previously known, and have received his Lordship's commands to tender you a seat in the Legislative Council. On the subject of politics he asks for no pledges. Believing that you labored zealously to bring about the present state of things, he gives you credit for sincerity and consistency enough to be anxious to maintain it. As a very strong opinion is entertained at the Colonial Office on the subject, it will be necessary for you to state your willingness to serve without pay. This, I hope, will be no obstacle, as the cost of election to the Lower House is more than equivalent for the pay—while a surer position with fair prospects of advancement in your profession will be yours, if elevated to the Council.

As it will be necessary to transmit your name to the Colonial Secretary for approval, please write me by return of post.

Yours faithfully

Jos. Howe.

Alexr. McDougall.

Then the following correspondence ensued:

Antigonish, 20th, Dec., 1842.

Dear Howe:

Your observation with respect to the "gall and wormwood" is perfectly correct, and were I in close communication with you I could perhaps enlighten you still more on the subject. I laugh, as I did once before, to utter scorn the miserable attempts of my personal adversaries (why I should have any except in political affairs is rather a problem), and I feel gratified when I reflect that their opposition originates in envy—a feeling cannot exist with reference to the individual whom we despise, *mais n'importe*. I know that the Bishop and the great body of the people of this County will rejoice at my advancement, and I care not for the opposition of the weakened sect to which I belong. Strange it is that the members of that sect should oppose me. When we meet I shall furnish you with a key to the hieroglyphic.

You have been abused by the Baptists: is it a wonder that I should be mauled by the Antigonish Presbyterians? According to Jacob Faithful, it is "human nature".

You as a staunch, steady and enduring friend will, I think, if God gives me health, be agreeably surprised at the alteration in my manner and appearance. My energies here regained their elasticity; the spirit of my dream is changed; and to use the language of Curran, I stand redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled, never more I trust to be enslaved.

The question of "pay" I have well considered, and I am happy to say that the opinion of the Government exactly coincides with my own. Your observation, however, with respect to the cost of election does not apply to me. I can solemnly assure you that terrible contest in which I obtained such an enormous majority did not cost either me or my friends twenty-five Pounds. But that has nothing to do with the general principle upon which in opposition I shall base my arguments. I want no pay, and the other members are sufficiently able to be equally disinterested. I do not know whether the enclosed note is expressed in the language of diplomacy, but trusting that the substance will atone for the want of form

I remain,

Yours faithfully

Alex. MacDougall.

Hon. Joseph Howe.

Antigonish,
20th Dec., 1842.

My dear Howe,

I willingly accept the office of a seat in the Legislative Council, and I respectfully tender my thanks to His Excellency Lord Falkland.

As the members of the Council are at least supposed to be able to support their official dignity without Provincial aid, I shall be compelled to oppose any measure which has "pay" for its object.

Yours faithfully,

Alex. MacDougall.

The advancement to a situation in which I may be enabled to serve my country is quite sufficient for me, and I therefore desire no pecuniary recompense.

Honorable Joseph Howe.

Halifax, Dec. 25, 1843.

My dear Mac,

You will see by the *Recorder* the course events have taken here. We have the sanction of the Liberals to a man, and the Tories are in a devil of a mess. I suppose we can count upon the aid of both your members. The enemy may attempt to tamper with DesBarres. You had better write him. Perhaps a little pressure from Marshall's constituents might keep him straight. I do not count on him. Uniacke and Young are reconciled, and are in line of battle strong. Drop me a line.

Yours truly

Joseph Howe.

The Hon.
Alexander MacDougall.

The correspondence culminated in an appointment made on December 28, 1842, which was officially announced the same day:

Provisionally, Alexander McDougall, Esquire, to be a Member of the Legislative Council in place of James Ratchford, Esq., resigned.

Some years later, further honours came to Mr. McDougall. Mr. William Frederick Des Barres, who was Solicitor-General in the Uniacke government, was elevated to a seat on the Supreme Court Bench, and the *Royal Gazette* of November 15, 1848, contains the record of the appointment of Mr. McDougall to be a member of the Executive Council and Solicitor-General of the province. The letter to Mr. Howe, in acknowledging the intimation of the new appointment, gives further evidence of some of the fine traits in Mr. McDougall's character:

(Alexander McDougall to Joseph Howe—Nov. 7, 1848.)

My dear Howe,

I cannot write. I cannot speak. I am as much out of breath as a prize-fighter was, who received the terrific left-hander exactly on the mark. Well, well! this world wags on most curiously. What would my poor, good old father say if he were to see his son gazetted as Solicitor General?

Ah! if he was but alive!—but I need not touch that string. For I know, from a similarity of circumstances, you can easily find the key note to my feelings.

I confess that during the last session, when Young and Doyle were elevated in the profession as Queen's Counsel, a title to which I had no inconsiderable claim, I felt rather annoyed that I should have been neglected; but the disappointment never made me swerve, and I clung to my party—the Liberal party—with more

tenacity than ever. I am satisfied when I find that I have friends in the Govt. who appreciate, or perhaps greatly overrate, my slender services.

Yours very truly,

Alex. McDougall.

Nov. 7, 1848.

The Honble.
Joseph Howe.

(Postscript)

I say! Gazette me as soon as you can. It will put some folks out of pain. Franceville goes in for Guysborough; at least I am told so. DesBarres' influence would do much, but as a judge of course he must remain neutral. I am only afraid that Hefferman may interfere and by dividing the Liberals let the enemy slip in.

A. McD.

In 1852 the *Nova Scotian* had a series of articles on the "Composition of the Government". In the issue of November 1, Mr. McDougall is the subject of the article. It says:

Having sketched, in our last, four or five of the members of the Administration, we propose in this number to do simple justice to these who are their associates.

The Hon. Alexander McDougall was a Halifax boy, educated at the Pictou Academy, under the careful training of the late Dr. McCulloch. Few of the pupils of that skilful teacher did him more credit. Called to the Bar in 1825, Mr. McDougall settled in the county of Sydney and practised for some years on the Eastern Circuit. He soon secured the confidence of the population among whom he lived, and came into the Legislature as their representative in 1836. As a public man he acted under our personal observation for years. In all the stormy discussions out of which slowly evolved the new constitution, Mr. McDougall worthily sustained his part. Without ever aspiring to be a leader, he always spoke firmly, tersely and to the point. Sound in his legal opinions, well read in constitutional lore, and fearless in debate, Mr. McDougall did good service to the cause in which he had engaged, and ever spoke and voted on the right side regardless of consequences.

From his appointment to the Legislative Council in 1843 he may be said to have led the Liberal Party in the Upper Branch. Though his health is much broken by a severe attack which his constitution sustained two years ago, his legal training, his knowledge of the past, and a natural quickness of perception, ready wit and invincible good humour, still enabled him to hold his own, even among the able men with which that Body has been of late recruited.

Mr. McDougall has his faults and weaknesses. Who has not? Among his redeeming traits his friends should not forget

his successful devotion to literary pursuits. If it were worth our while, we could quote poems from his pen that for wit, eloquence and perfect finish have been rarely equalled in any of the Provinces. Running our eye over the list of scribblers who assail him, we cannot discover a man who might not be proud to be their author.

Mr. McDougall has held the office of Solicitor-General since the elevation of Judge DesBarres to the Bench, and if the Administration do not derive all the assistance from his service which they might command if he resided in the Capital, they yet have his very efficient aid whenever the Legislature is in session.

Mr. McDougall filled the office of Solicitor-General from 1848 to 1854. In the latter year Mr. Howe, his great friend, accepted the post of chairman of the Railway Board and resigned his office as Premier. Mr. William Young was called upon to form a new administration, and for the office of Solicitor-General he selected Mr. William A. Henry, a member of the House of Assembly, the same gentleman whose advent, fourteen years previously, caused the disappearance of Mr. McDougall from that branch of the Legislature. Mr. McDougall did not long survive. On Tuesday, March 13, 1855, he occupied his seat in the Legislative Council. That evening, after the House had adjourned, he died suddenly in his home. The high esteem in which he was held is amply evidenced by the proceedings in both Houses the following day. In the Legislative Council on Wednesday, The Hon. Jonathan McCully, the leader of the Liberal party in that House, rose and addressed the President as follows:

Under deeply painful circumstances, Mr. President, I rise to ask the House to adjourn. Sir, one of our members who was yesterday in his place, one whose worth will long be remembered by those of us who survive him, one who heretofore filled a high office in the profession he adorned, and in the councils of this country, is, alas! no more. Yesterday he mingled in our debates; yesterday he was one of us; to-day he dwells in the spirit land. Sir, permit me here to pay a small tribute of respect to the memory of one so worthy.

Our late honorable companion was a man of noble nature. He had many friends; he could have no enemies. Possessed of a highly cultivated and classic mind, deeply versed in historic lore, amiable in his manners, persuasive in address, he was yet powerful in argument.

Gifted with a fervid, a chaste, and a poetical imagination, which in the past has enriched the pages of the ablest of the

periodicals of the fatherland—he added, also, the ability to reason with great accuracy and justness. He was eminently a lover of freedom and free institutions. His disposition was kind and benevolent, and his sudden demise makes a vacancy here, I feel free to say, that we all most deeply deplore. He has died as a statesman could wish—in the senate and at the post of duty. Sir, in the decease of my honorable friend, his relations lose a kind-hearted man, this House one of its most efficient members, and our common country one of the worthiest of the sons of her soil.

For many years I enjoyed the honour of acquaintance with our lamented friend. For six years past, I lived on terms of much intimacy with him, and never, Sir, for one single hour during all that time has so much as a passing cloud dimmed the friendly relationship that existed between us.

In respect then to his memory—in respect to departed worth—I move that the House do now adjourn.

Hon. Mr. Almon, the leader of the Conservative party, seconded the motion and said:

I rise, Sir, to perform a melancholy but at the same time a ready duty, the seconding of the motion of the honorable and learned gentleman. Altho' opposed to the late Honorable Mr. McDougall in political life, I have never found him just such as I should wish an opponent to be. I am sure that I speak the sentiment of every member of this side of the House when I say we deplore the loss the Council has sustained, and that we sympathise with his afflicted relatives on this sad and sudden event.

Several members of the Council expressed briefly their regret and respect in reference to the loss which had thus been brought to the consideration of the House. A resolution to the effect that the Council attend the funeral of the late Honorable Alexander McDougall, and adjourn to Monday next, was adopted unanimously. The Council also agreed to wear crape, as a mark of mourning, during the remainder of the Session.

The President announced that he had received a letter from the Speaker of the House of Assembly, Stewart Campbell, enclosing a resolution of the House.

The Clerk of the House read the resolution as follows:

House of Assembly,
14th March., 1855.

Resolved unanimously, that this House will attend the funeral of the late Honorable Alexander McDougall, a late member of

the Legislative Council, and that the Speaker of this House be requested to communicate the foregoing resolution to the President of the Legislative Council.

The Council *Ordered* That the said letter do lie on the Table, and that the President be requested to communicate to the Honourable Speaker of the House of Assembly the time appointed for the funeral of Mr. McDougall.

In the House of Assembly similar notice was taken of their former member. The Hon. William Young, Premier and Attorney-General, rose and said:

Mr. Speaker: I rise to announce to the House the death of the Hon. Alexander McDougall, a member of the Legislative Council. It is usual on such occasions that a resolution should pass such as I hold in my hand: but I may remark, Sir, that Mr. McDougall has peculiar claims to the respect and regard of this House. He was long a member of this Assembly—respected and esteemed by all who knew him here—a man whom I have been happy for many years to reckon among my personal and political friends—a man of fine poetic taste, cultivated intellect, and mild and inoffensive manners. I beg, Sir, to move as follows:

Resolved—That this House will attend the funeral of the late Hon. Alexander McDougall, late a member of the Legislative Council, and that the Speaker of this House be requested to communicate the foregoing resolution to the President of the Legislative Council.

The Hon. James W. Johnston, the leader of the Opposition, seconded the resolution, which passed unanimously.

The House of Assembly met at half-past two on Friday, March 16, and in a body attended the funeral from Mr. McDougall's residence, No. 83 Pleasant Street. The remains were buried in Camp Hill cemetery.

Mr. McDougall was married at Antigonish on January 24, 1831, by the Rev. T. H. White to Mrs. Elizabeth Ann Van Buskirk (*nee* Watson). One daughter survived him—Katherine, who married James Edward Wilson of Halifax, one of the three persons saved out of some two hundred from the foundering of the steamship *London* in the Bay of Biscay in 1866. Mrs. Wilson died on August 10, 1892, aged 80 years; and surviving her are Mrs. Lucy Wilson Woyke of Los Angeles and Cavassa Wilson, C.E., of Hawaii, Honolulu.