

TOWNS ARE FRACTIOUS.

Often Refuse to Take Root Where They Are Planted.

The rise and fall of Broughton, the town which the Cape Breton Coal, Iron and Railway Company laid out in the forest wilds of the island of Cape Breton, a part of Nova Scotia, furnish an illustration of the difficulty of making a town grow just where it is wanted to.

On the purchase of the Broughton areas in 1904 by an English syndicate, work was started with vim. Large gangs of men were employed uncovering the coal veins and in other preliminary work about the mine. Houses went up as if by magic, and the nucleus of a permanent population had been established, when suddenly and without the slightest warning orders were given to close down everything. Operations ceased, and gradually those who had taken up their residence in the little mushroom town in the woods, realizing that the boom had "busted," packed up and left it for more remunerative fields. To-day there are not more than sixty people in the town.

One of the two hotels that were erected, the Crown, was intended for the workmen, and the other, the Broughton Arms, for the officials and transient guests. The Broughton Arms in luxuriance of equipment is unsurpassed in the Maritime Provinces of Canada. It strongly resembles an old English tavern of the eighteenth century. The floors are hard wood, and in the trim black walnut predominates. Rich pile carpets cover the floor, and rare ornaments from London and Paris adorn the walls. There is a telephone in every room, and the furniture is of the best. A manager was imported from New York to run the hotel, an excellent chef took charge of the culinary department, and for a time everything went well.

The company, however, soon began to encounter difficulties. It planned to ship its coal over the Sydney & Louisburg Railway to either Sydney or Louisburg, and a track was laid to connect with the Sydney & Louisburg line. But when the track had been laid it was discovered that the Dominion Coal Company, which owns the Sydney & Louisburg Railway, wouldn't allow the new company to use it. Undaunted, the men behind it set about to construct a line of their own from Broughton to Sydney and from Broughton to Louisburg. Surveys were made, and, as it was found that it would be a much more expensive undertaking than at first anticipated, the Nova Scotian government was approached for a subsidy. This was never granted.

Other signs of hard times then began to appear. The staff was cut down and the general manager and chief engineer resigned. It was announced that President Mayhew was going to manage the company himself, and he came out from England to direct operations. After a few months he went back to the old country, leaving his son in charge. This was the last he was ever to see of that son, for a few months later the young man cut his throat in a lonely farmhouse near the scene of the company's operations. Why he did the deed may never be known. He took his secret with him to the grave, but the general impression was that the company's trouble had something to do with it. The suicide of young Mayhew was the last blow to bring Broughton's troubles to a culmination. Disheartened by his son's sad ending, Horace Mayhew, sr., relinquished all his interest in the place. The few persons who still lived in the Broughton Arms moved to Sydney, and that hotel and the Crown were closed and now stand empty, representing between them \$60,000 practically thrown away.

No longer is the little church filled as formerly. Only a few persons attend the services there now. This church is perhaps unique in America, in that it is finished inside with birch bark. The walls and altar are covered with this, and the seats are made of birch poles with the bark still attached. The contrast between the dull gray of the bark and the heavy brass cross and candlesticks presented to the church by various members of the Broughton company is striking.

Thomas H. Quinn, of Worcester, Mass., a dealer in secondhand machinery, recently purchased for the sum of \$4,925 practically the entire village of Wilkinsonville, situated on old Blackstone River, about a dozen miles from Worcester. The village was sold at public auction, ordered by the trustees of the Slater estate, formerly well known in mill circles throughout the country.

The only thing that did not go with the village was the rectory and church of St. John's parish. For an inhabited place Wilkinsonville is as near to a deserted village as can be found. It made a brave start in life, but prosperity took another road.

In 1815 Jeremiah Stone sold what was known as the Dudley farm to Asa Waters, of Millbury, Mass. The latter in 1823 sold to David Wilkinson, of Pawtucket, the farm and all the water privileges. He built mills and Wilkinsonville flourished for some years. He built an inn which became famous to coaches on the through Boston-Providence turnpike. In 1829 he felt the general depression in mill circles throughout New England and was forced to sell out to H. N. Slater. When the Slaters died off there was nothing left for the town to do but decline. Its public auction to the highest bidder was the last echo.

In all of its eighty-one years the village never



PRINCIPAL HOTEL AT MONTREAT, N. C.
Town founded by John S. Huyler, candy manufacturer of this city, with brilliant promise, but sold the other day to the Presbyterian Synod of that state.

had a fire. Eleven years ago electric lights were introduced, but that is the only modern improvement. A stranger walking through the village now misses all the signs of common

Synod of North Carolina additional confirmation of the oft repeated assertion that towns, like poets, are born and not made. Though the Rev. John S. Collins, a Congre-

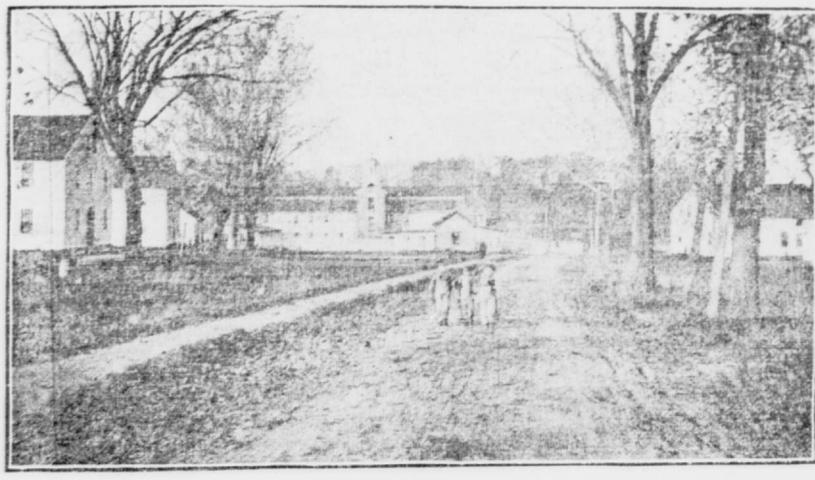


PRINCIPAL HOTEL AT BROUGHTON, N. S.
Town that was founded in the forest with lavish outlay in 1904, but soon abandoned to decay.

everyday life, even the old post office appearing as if it were out of business.

Those familiar with the movement which resulted in its birth find in the recent sale of the picturesque little mountain village of Montreat, N. C., by John S. Huyler, the candy manufacturer of New York City, to the Presbyterian

national clergyman, of New Haven, founded the Mountain Retreat Association nine years ago. Mr. Huyler, who was one of the original corporators and the principal holder of stock, has been generally credited with being the founder of the village which has now been sold, and it has commonly been known as "Huyler's village." The original corporators intended that



THE ONCE BUSY TOWN OF WILKINSONVILLE, MASS.
Practically deserted since the decline of its milling industry.

Montreat should become a veritable spotless town. It was to be, as its name implied, a mountain retreat where desirable persons might go for residence either the year around or for a portion of the year. The original association, made up of business men, professional men and ministers of several denominations, was chartered by a special act of the North Carolina Legislature in 1897. Membership in the corporation was not limited to any one locality. The stockholders were scattered throughout the United States. Among those in New York who held stock were Mr. Huyler, Charles N. Crittenton, the Rev. Dr. David Gregg, then pastor of the Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn; the Rev. Dr. A. C. Dixon, then pastor of the Hanson Place Baptist Church, Brooklyn; the Rev. Dr. Charles L. Thompson, secretary of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, and the late Henry R. Elliott, then editor of "The Church Economist."

The general plan of Montreat was to be something like that of Ocean Grove, N. J., but it differed in many respects. No one person was to be allowed to hold more than five lots or ten acres of the farm tract, and all lot holders were to share equally, in proportion to the number of lots they held, in the earnings of the enterprise through the profits from the sale of land and from other sources. All profits were to be adjusted by a managing committee for the general betterment of the community, for the laying out and construction of streets, parks and, in short, for all the work usually provided for by taxation in the regular ordinary naturally born city. This arrangement would, of course, reduce the taxes for local purposes to a mere bagatelle, and, in fact, an agreement was incorporated in the leases guaranteeing that such taxes should not exceed 1 per cent of the assessed valuation.

The project started out well, and in a short time the town had about fifty permanent residents, about twenty houses, a store, a temporary bank and a circulating library. Union services were held on Sunday, with preaching and Sunday school, and there was the midweek prayer meeting usual to all well ordered communities. Things looked rosy for Montreat, but after the first burst of enthusiasm there seemed to be a reaction.

Interest in the project waned. Some of the New York stockholders went down to look the ground over. Dr. C. L. Thompson was one of them. He said the other day that his remembrance of the visit was that Montreat was not at that time, three or four years ago, manifesting any remarkable signs of development. He remembered that the place had then a schoolhouse, a meeting hall, a hotel and a number of cottages. Personally, he said that his connection with the project had not been a remunerative one. Dr. Thompson is delighted with the location of Montreat, however, and sees no reason why the Presbyterians of the North Carolina Synod should not make a success of their undertaking. Briefly, they plan to make it a mountain centre, a summer resort under Christian influences for the holding of summer schools, assemblies and religious meetings of various kinds—in fact, a kind of mountain Chautauqua. Montreat now comprises about forty cottages. The hotel, which was erected by Mr. Huyler at a cost of about \$17,500, is a commodious frame structure, the principal building in the place. Other public buildings include a church and a schoolhouse. A combined roller skating rink and bowling alley is now being erected.

Montreat comprises about forty-five hundred acres lying in an irregular valley or cove, bounded on the east by the main ridge of the Blue Ridge Mountains, on the west by a spur of the same mountains. Graybeard Mountain towers above it at the north, but there is no mountain barrier toward the south. To purchase the town the North Carolina Presbyterians had to raise \$50,000. Of this amount \$25,000 was to be paid in cash, and the rest in preferred stock, which the synod has agreed to cancel in ten years. The plan is to raise at once \$50,000, paying \$25,000 down and using the other \$25,000 in providing the much needed improvements, such as waterworks, sewers, roads and things of a like nature. Mr. Huyler retains fifteen acres of land for a summer home for himself.

All who have visited this town agree that, whatever else the place may lack, Montreat certainly lacks nothing of natural charm. It is in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains, and the scenery is declared to be as fine as any in the country. It is about two miles from the Black Mountain station of the Southern Railway. It is sixteen miles east of Asheville and about fifteen miles from Biltmore, the Southern estate of George W. Vanderbilt. Because the city of Asheville recently acquired the north fork of the Swannanoa River as a watershed, all the old roads and trails up that valley have been closed to the public, and the main trail to the summit of Mount Mitchell, the highest mountain peak east of the Mississippi River, towering 6,711 feet, now starts from Montreat, passing over Graybeard Mountain.

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