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W. H. WITHROW, D.D., EDITOR.

TORONTO, DECEMBER, 1900.

The Man Behind the Book.

While teaching a class in a large and successful Sunday-school lately, we were more than ever impressed with the shortness of the time allowed for the great result at which we aim. Not more than three-quarters of an hour is the possible limit in the class, and this but once a week. The time seemed to pass before we knew it.

While deep and strong impressions may be made in this time, it requires concentrated thought and intense energy. It does not take long for the weight of a pile-driver to drop upon a pile and drive it many feet, perchance, into the earth. It does take a good deal of time to overcome the inertia of a huge mass and raise it to the top of a beam. Now, we cannot drop down on our class like the weight of a pile-driver, but we can give force and emphasis to our teaching by due preparation and concentration of

thought and effort and prayer upon the lesson. But the greatest influence of the teacher should be his or her strong individual personality, the man or the woman behind the lesson.

We may be permitted a personal reminiscence. One of the most potent, moulding influences on our own life was that of the late Robert Wilkes, M.P., for many years our devoted Sunday-school teacher and class-leader. We remember to this day much of his teaching, but more of it we have forgotten; but one thing we shall never forget—his intense moral earnestness, the manner in which he was wont to plead with his class, sometimes with tears, to surrender themselves to the Great Teacher.

Mr. Wilkes was at that time, as during all his life, a very busy man. He was travelling almost constantly. He learned the lesson by heart and ruminated upon it while waiting for railway trains, in crowded stations, and upon the train. He came to the class surcharged, inspired with the truths which he had so incorporated into his very being. He was like an electric battery giving out mental shocks that stirred every heart and conscience.

But above and beyond this was his personal interest in each scholar. If any of us were absent from class or Sunday-school, we were sure of a visit on Saturday night, if not before, from this busy man. He selected books for our reading, gave wise counsels for our conduct, he surrounded our lives with loving interest and exercised a spell of power over our whole heart and mind. He was one of the best and most devoted Sunday-school teachers we ever knew. This busy commercial traveller acquired a working acquaintance with both Greek and Hebrew that he might the better comprehend the oracles of God, as he gained a familiar acquaintance with French and German for business purposes.

All teachers cannot do just as Robert Wilkes did; but all may be animated by the same love and zeal. They can show a personal interest in their scholars, in their home life, in their daily toil, in their hopes and ambitions. Thus they can grapple them to their hearts with hooks of steel. A call from the teacher at the home will do more to gain an influence over the life than a year's abstract and impersonal teaching. Perhaps, better still, will be inviting the scholars to one's own home, but the sep-

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