

## OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

### GLIMPSSES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. NO. II.

The Assembly services on the Sabbath were conducted by the delegates from Scotland, Professor Bruce preaching in the morning, and Principal Cairns in the evening. In consequence of being myself engaged elsewhere in the forenoon, I had not the pleasure of hearing Professor Bruce. I am told that his sermon was admirable. In the evening I found myself in Crescent street Church, where a very large congregation had assembled to hear Principal Cairns. The sermon was a right noble one on the words, "His name shall endure forever." He shewed first that that name is *filled*, and secondly that it is *destined*, to endure. Under the first head he analyzed with mingled power and simplicity the laws of memory. While he was discussing this part of his subject, I was again and again reminded of one of John Duncan's striking aphorisms. "Baptize philosophy, let her be called *Mary, ancilla Domini* (the handmaid of the Lord). She may serve but must not rule in Christ's house." The discourse was lighted up here and there with the loveliest imagery. Perhaps, indeed, I should hardly say *lighted up*, for it was pre-eminently distinguished by luminous, as well as massive and majestic thought. A friend of mine pronounced a very just criticism upon it, remarking that it was "the sermon of a very good as well as a very great man." Would the readers of THE PRESBYTERIAN care to have a sentence or two in regard to the great preacher's appearance and manner? Well, he is a man of large frame and lofty stature, wearing a crown of abundant gray hair. His manner is far from graceful, and his tones are somewhat heavy and monotonous; but all this is forgotten as we listen to the flow of chaste and beautiful language which, like some full and placid stream, bears on its bosom a burden of clear and weighty thought, while the thought again is penetrated through and through with strong but restrained feeling.

When writing in my former letter in reference to the way in which the Home Mission Committee had been freed from their incubus of debt, I failed to mention a circumstance which seems to me in a more than usual degree worthy of record. The day before that on which the accounts of the Church would close for the year, Mr. Warden received a telegram from Toronto announcing that a debt of eleven hundred dollars still remained. He set to work immediately, and before the day was done, the required sum was collected, and the indebtedness of the Home Mission Committee had melted away. What a dead set he must have made on the great, liberal, and wealthy firms of Montreal like Bullion and Gould, and L'Argent and Cashit. All honour to his pluck and energy!

The report of the committee on Ministers' Widows' and Orphans' Fund was in a very high degree satisfactory. The same statement cannot be made regarding the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund. I suppose it is well known—it ought at least to be well known—that this fund is sustained by means of collections from congregations and assessment on ministers' professional incomes, the assessment being graduated by the amount of salary. This feature of the scheme was objected to by certain brethren, while others took strong ground against the regulations in accordance with which the fund is managed. Whatever reason there may have been in the complaints on the latter score, I feel very strongly that the provision which requires that the fund shall be in part sustained by means of assessment on ministers' incomes—the assessment being proportional to the amount of stipend—is very reasonable and equitable. Mr. William Root made some very telling remarks with reference to the readiness which had been manifested by ministers with very small salaries to pay their assessment. They out of their deep penury often met the demand cheerfully. The fund, which is designed to make some provision for servants of God who in consequence of failing health or advancing years are laid aside from active duty, is one which commends itself to the best instincts of our nature. It is true that it yields to no beneficiary more than \$250 *per annum*; but the assurance of even that meagre provision, which he himself, perhaps with manly self-denial has done something to secure, may do much to sustain many a tried and toiling heart. May a great blessing rest on the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund!

It is sometimes said that we must always read reports and listen to speeches under the remembrance that those who make them have an almost irresistible, even though it may be an involuntary, tendency to get things to look as pleasant as possible. Some one makes the remark that in the preparation of such pictures, one is tempted even in spite of himself to use a very large amount of that very agreeable pigment—*couleur de rose*. Perhaps there is some truth in this statement; but, if so, I think that the compilers of our chief reports have guarded against the danger, as will be admitted by those who are acquainted with the facts and are thus qualified to form a judgment. I do not at all mean that the reports are in the least despondent in their character. On the contrary, they are characterized by a tone of buoyancy and hopefulness; but there appears to be no attempt to select and magnify merely pleasant and favourable details, and suppress or minimize those of an opposite kind. Notably is this the case with the Report of the Western Branch of the Foreign Mission Committee which was submitted by Professor McLaren. The professor, who is always very calm and careful in his statements and perhaps inclined to be reticent even, has set forth the state of our foreign mission work with much candour. He is enabled to state that "the work has, on the whole, been steadily advancing, new doors for missionary labour have been opened, the missionary staff has been strengthened, and the divine blessing has not been withheld. It is also satisfactory to find that if the contributions have not come up to the estimate made for the year, they are at least somewhat in advance of any previously received for foreign missions." All this is set forth clearly and in detail. That is the obverse side of the medal; but the reverse is also carefully shewn. Two matters are specially dwelt upon, viz., the existence of dissensions among the members of the mission staff in Central India, and the startlingly large increase which marks the expenditure for the year. In reference to the former matter, it appears that "all the members of the mission staff both at Indore and Mhow have come in some way to be involved in the difficulties which have arisen." Certain changes have been made in the mission, and the committee express the hope that their action will issue in the restoration of harmony among the labourers in that distant field. What urgent need is there for the exercise of patience and forbearance, as well as for zeal and diligence, on the part of missionaries among the heathen. In reference to the greatly increased expenditure, the report itself admits that the statement reveals a state of things which demands explanation. It appears that the debt was considerably greater at the beginning of the year than it was supposed to be at last Assembly. Further, it is shewn that a very large sum was expended in purchasing or repairing mission property both in Formosa and Central India. While the Church may consider that the addition of \$11,500 to the foreign missionary debt can thus be accounted for, every one will approve of the committee's procedure in securing, both from India and Formosa, estimates in advance for the expenditure during the current year.

As was recently shewn in THE PRESBYTERIAN, the work carried on by the Eastern Section of the Foreign Mission Committee was on the whole of an extremely gratifying character. W. D.

### OBITUARY NOTICES.

MR. JOHN MCKENZIE.

Mr. John McKenzie, of Petrolea, whose death took place on the 20th of May, was born in the town of Strathy, Sutherlandshire, Scotland, in the year 1839, where his aged parents still reside. Endowed with an active and enterprising mind, he entered the dry goods business at an early age. When about eighteen his thoughts turned towards Canada as a field of labour. Arriving at Montreal soon after, his amiable disposition and his business ability soon secured for him an opening in the town of Picton. After remaining in this place for a time, he removed to St. Mary's, where he established himself in business. Petrolea presenting an inviting field for business enterprise, there he removed with his family, where he carried on his favourite pursuit until death called him home to rest from his labours. During his stay in Petrolea he took an active interest in the prosperity of the town, for a season giving his time and talents in this respect, as a representative of the people in the town council. Whilst a diligent man of business he ever shewed a

deep interest in the cause of Christ. As an elder in the Presbyterian church of Petrolea, he was ever faithful in attendance upon the various services of worship, he was ever earnest in the furtherance of anything that was for the good of the congregation. For a time he was Superintendent of the Sabbath school, and after he was relieved from that position he still continued a faithful worker in the school until compelled by sickness to withdraw. To the last the welfare of the congregation was on his heart, his prayer for it that God would send times of refreshing, that others might enjoy the happiness in Christ that he was blessed with. As a husband, he was loving and devoted; as a father, he was watchful, kind and indulgent. His end was not merely peaceful, it was one of joy. So bright was his hope, so assuring his faith in the atonement of Christ, that for days, though on earth, he was not of it. The love of Jesus, the brightness of his heavenly home, the fulness of his joy were the themes on which his mind dwelt, and of which, though weak in body, he continually gave utterance in songs of praise. His was a death scene that was a living exposition of the words of Peter, "Whom having not seen he loved, in whom, though now he saw Him not, yet believing, he rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

MR. NATHAN IRWIN.

Mr. Nathan Irwin was born in the County Monaghan, Ireland, in the year 1807, and came to this country in 1830. For the greater part of seven years he lived in Prescott. At the end of that time, in the troublous year of '37, his wife, who survives him, arrived in this country, and, true to an early attachment, and to an early plighted troth, they were married, and came that same year to the 9th concession of the township of King, where, by energy, industry and perseverance they made a very comfortable home for themselves and family.

For a time they had no Presbyterian church nearer than Bondhead, where they frequently attended. But while Mr. Irwin was yet a young man, he and others were ordained to the eldership, and the congregation on the 9th of King organized by the Rev. Dr. Burns, of fragrant memory. From then till his death he took a very active part in carrying on the affairs of the West King congregation, for a quarter of a century under the pastoral care of the late Rev. J. Adams. On the 22nd of March last, in the midst of plans and work for the advancement of that cause which he loved, he was suddenly laid aside, and in one brief week of suffering—"endured as seeing Him who is invisible"—and surrounded by his sorrowing family, he passed away, calmly and peacefully, to his eternal reward. Amongst his last words, in answer to a question put by one soon to be a widow, he said, "I have that peace which passeth all understanding." And now, we trust he enjoys that peace where faith is sight and hope fruition.

### MAKING CHURCH ATTRACTIVE.

MR. EDITOR,—Under the above caption there appeared in THE PRESBYTERIAN of the 28th ult., a selection from "The Christian at Work," which seems to require a little friendly criticism. I can hardly suppose that the insertion of the article means the adoption or recommendation of what it teaches, and probably, when it has called forth a rejoinder or two, it will have served its purpose. Judging from the efforts made in that direction, one would be led to conclude that, at the present time, in not a few quarters, making church attractive engrosses attention much more than anything else about the church. All right, provided this be done in the right way, in a way consistent with the character of the Church, and the great purposes for which it has been instituted, to be the means of the salvation of immortal souls through the preaching of the Gospel and the observance of its divine ordinances. We question very much whether the methods recommended by the "Christian at Work" be at all in this direction. The Church is to be made attractive, to accomplish the Herculean labour of "keeping our young people." They are so hard to keep, these young people. Right here, let me say, to borrow a phrase from your contemporary, I am rather thankful not to be now among our young people, as I should think some of the means made use of to keep them far from being a compliment to either my head or heart. Such are some of those advocated by the article in question.

Three things, according to this authority, appear to