

MR. W. H. HOWLAND AT HOME.  
BY BERTHA M. WRIGHT, OTTAWA.

The inner life of a much-talked-of man is always of interest to the outside public, and especially the life of one whose manner of thought and expression is oftentimes incomprehensible to the world, as was Mr. W. H. Howland's.

It is always of interest to meet for the first time a person of whom you have heard much, concerning whom you have formed all kinds of opinions, against whom, possibly, you may have entertained absurd prejudices. It was a beautiful evening in July, 1886, as a party of Christian workers were returning to Toronto on the 'Chicora' from the Niagara conference for Bible study, that a friend said, 'Come, let me introduce you to Mr. Howland.' I wondered to myself 'how far in this case will the real differ from the ideal, or how nearly will the two correspond?'

To give you an idea of my first impression of Mr. Howland, I will try and record faithfully, though briefly, as best I can remember, what took place between us. We simply talked as ordinary mortals do, and I was enabled to get a far more real and true idea of what kind of a man he really was than if I had set to work deliberately to pump out certain facts and fancies. 'So you've come all the way from Ottawa,' he said, in his bright, genial way, 'for a good square meal—you dear hungry soul—I trust you were satisfied this afternoon. I do so thank God for your work' he continued, 'and though I've never before had the pleasure of meeting you, have often prayed that He would preserve you in health and strength and so fill your heart with His own love and desire for poor sin-stricken souls, and your very nature with holy fire that you will be satisfied only when lighting unlighted torches everywhere.'

For a moment he paused, then said thoughtfully, 'By the way, how old are you? I mean since you were born again? How did it happen? Tell me all about it.' At first I hesitated, no one had ever before asked me such a question, and as it was not customary to relate one's experiences in the church to which I belonged, I tried to evade the question by replying, 'Well, really, Mr. Howland, I don't remember how it happened. One thing I know whereas I was blind now I see.' May I ask, 'How were thine eyes opened?' 'Certainly,' he said 'I was visiting in Acton, England, at the time, about ten years ago. In the bedroom assigned me there hung upon the wall the text 'Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, thou art mine.' I had come upstairs after a pleasantly spent evening with conversation and laughter in which there was no thought of anything beyond this world's matters. I was careless and indifferent to the things of God. Not an atheist but a practical unbeliever, as I had no faith in any exercise of Divine will or power in mundane affairs. Never was any frame of mind so seemingly opposed to the admittance of serious thought, as I sat on the edge of the bed carelessly reviewing the events of the day. Presently my eyes caught the words of the text, but whether any special interest came at the moment of reading them I do not remember; but I do remember distinctly that neither that night nor until I came into the light of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, did those words pass from my mind. 'Fear not.' What had I to fear? Gradually, and unwillingly, I was forced to seek that knowledge in my Bible and on my knees. Prejudice, pride, love of the world, all operated adversely to the acceptance of the fact, that I was a poor lost sinner in God's sight, and in need of a Saviour; but thanks be to His name, He led me on until light dawned on my soul and I saw Him whom to know is life eternal.'

"When on the cross my Lord I saw,  
Nailed there by sins of mine,  
Fast fell the burning tears, but now  
I'm singing all the time."

We were just coming into Toronto. Before us was the city with its magnificent buildings, the lake like a sea of glass reflected the rays of the setting sun, which cast a halo of glory over it all. As we stood on the deck, enraptured with the scene, some one remarked: 'I should think, Mr. Howland, that your heart would be lifted up with pride as you look out over

this beautiful city, and remember that you are its chief magistrate, and the first to open its session with prayer, and to place over the throne of its Council Chamber, the text: "Unless the Lord keep the city, the watchman watcheth but in vain?" "Bless you, no," was the characteristic reply; "What are the empty titles of earth compared with those bestowed upon me by the King Himself—Son of God—heir to "the city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God." Praise His dear name: that is something worth boasting about, is it not?'

Several days later, an invitation came from Mrs. Howland—dear Mrs. Howland, whom to know is to love—to spend Saturday evening and Sunday with them in their charming home at Queen's Park. Never did I so realize the beauty of home-life as during that little visit with this ideally wedded couple and their six beautiful children. One regrets the limitations that good taste puts upon one's expression of one's thoughts and opinions concerning friends, for I cannot say all that I think and feel as to the relations of loving confidence and mutual trust between father, mother and children.

As we gathered in the study after dinner, Mr. Howland said:—

'Now children, we must study our Sun-

day lesson. Who would be Matthew Henry?'

'I will' said one.

'And I will be Barnes,' said another.

'May I be Sunday School Times?'

'Yes, dearie.'

'And may I find passages in the Concordance?'

'Yes, and Fraulein will be the Westminster Teacher. Now then, are we ready?'

Taking his seat at the desk, with Bible, pencil and paper, baby on his knee, and a beautiful little boy of three years of age standing on the chair behind him, with both arms around his father's neck, he read the first verse of the appointed lesson, and proceeded to draw from the children their own ideas with reference to the meaning of the passages. 'Now, Matthew Henry,' said he 'let us hear what you have to say about this verse.' One of the children, seated on a stool at his feet, with a huge commentary, read aloud, while he made a note of any point of special interest. 'Barnes,' the Times, and the Westminster Teacher, were then called upon in turn for their opinions; while now and then a bright, interesting story was told to illustrate the case in point and fasten it upon the minds of the children.

A pleasant, profitable evening was thus spent in the study of the Word.

Early Sunday morning we were awakened by the patter of little feet in the hall, and merry childish voices calling—'Father, may we come in?' 'We've got ever so many kisses, and a bootiful-text for papa,' chimed in the baby.

'Come in, come in, you dear "bootiful" children. Let us have baby's kiss and baby's text first.' Sweeter than the sweetest music were the words lisped by baby lips—'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits who crowneth thee with lovely kindness and tender mercies.'

'That's beautiful, little one. Now, dear, have you a message for father this morning?'

'Yes, but I want to whisper it in your ear, for it is a secret—"Unto us who believe," she said softly, "He is precious."

'Yes, darling, He is, indeed.'

An hour later, parents, children, governess and servants, gathered in the study for worship. If one may judge from the bright, happy faces which greeted one, family worship was not regarded as a solemn duty to be performed religiously every morning, but rather as a blessed privilege in which all participated. An appropriate hymn was chosen by the children, one of whom presided at the organ. A portion of Scripture was then read, each one taking a verse in turn, which was commented upon by Mr. Howland, after which he led in prayer. What a prayer! It was no whining supplication—no formal petitioning of a divine majesty. Coming as he did, from the presence chamber of the King, with whom he always spent an

several colored people, two Chinamen, in fact all sorts and conditions of men, women and children. It was a wonderful sight.

The blessed work carried on in connection with this class, is best described in Mr. Howland's own words: 'Last Sunday was one long-to-be-remembered. The blessing was a very sweet one, for Jesus Himself was there, and with heart and soul the beautiful hymn was sung on our knees.'

Reign, Master, Jesus, reign.'

At the last verse—

'I never knew such love before,  
Saying, 'Go in peace and sin no more.'

a poor, tired, darkened soul stretched forth the arms of faith, saying, 'That's for me,' and immediately the great, loving arms encircled him, and the 'peace which passeth all understanding' filled his soul, God speaking with him face to face. None around him knew of it, or saw the Father's joy in clasping the 'lost one found,' but the courts of heaven echoed and re-echoed the joyful peal, and Jesus saw of the travail of his soul and was satisfied.

Do you ask if the real differed from the ideal? Or if the seven years which have since elapsed have changed, in any measure, those early impressions? I would say no; it has only served to deepen them, so that no words of mine can tell all that I feel with reference to the splendor of that man's life and work.

It was a life and work which made itself felt throughout the whole of our social system, for it went out in a spirit of Christ-like self-sacrifice to save and to bless men, women and children without reference to social, denominational or national distinction.

'One of the grandest monuments to his public spirited benevolence, says *The Globe*, is the Industrial School at Mimico, in the establishment of which he was not only the prime mover, but the very life and soul of its existence.'

He was instrumental in founding the Toronto Mission Union, with a view of reaching, with the Gospel, the unreached masses. He was also one of the founders of the Prisoners' Aid Association, and though he threw his whole heart and soul into every movement which had for its object the alleviation of the woes of the unfortunate, he was not content with a philanthropy which picks up the victims as they fly broken from the wheel of oppression, but he puts forth every effort to stop the wheel itself.

He so aroused public sentiment through his lectures on 'Neglected Children,' that at the last session of the Ontario Legislature, an Act was passed for the prevention of cruelty to and the better protection of children, and the Children's Aid Society was organized and incorporated.

For several years as President of the Ontario Branch of the Dominion Alliance, he has thrown his energies into the Prohibition movement, and as a result of the pressure brought to bear upon the Mowat Government by that organization, it was finally decided to take a Plebiscite on January 1st.

Thus in patient continuous labor has he served his God, his home and his native land; through good report and evil report, (for he has had his share of adverse criticism resulting from the prejudice of ignorance) until 'One whom having not seen he loved,' beckoned to him from the glory, and we could almost hear the 'Well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'

We miss a dear face  
From its wonted place,  
And our hearts are full of sadness;  
But looking above,  
To the God we love,  
The sorrow is chang'd to gladness.

For we know that there,  
In that purer air—  
The home of our Heavenly Father  
Is the one we miss,  
In that land of bliss,  
Where the angels love to gather.

We'll not repine,  
But our hearts incline,  
The steps of the lov'd one to follow;  
Then let the years pass,  
Like sands in a glass,  
Or sighing winds over the hollow.

Oh! we yet shall meet  
On the golden street,  
And never again shall we sever;  
Earth's troubles all past,  
In our haven at last,  
With fulness of joy for ever.



MR. W. H. HOWLAND.

hour or two alone in worship and communion early in the morning before meeting with his family, his whole soul seemed aglow with spiritual ecstasy, and we listened to words which led us step by step to the very gates of heaven.

Breakfast over, we hurriedly prepared for a three mile walk to the Mercer Reformatory, where for years Mr. Howland has had the supervision of a flourishing Sunday School. It was a delightful morning for an Emmaus walk, and the distance was none too long.

In the chapel we found upwards of two hundred women and girls from all parts of the province. The very sight of him as he entered brought a ray of light into dark and hardened faces. After Sunday School the Central Prison was visited, and a short pointed Gospel address was given in the power of the Holy Ghost to several hundred convicts. Like His Master, Mr. Howland was a friend of publicans and sinners; a wicked and ruined manhood as well as a fallen and blighted womanhood found in him a large-hearted, sympathetic brother, ready to take them by the hand and lift them up into a life of purity.

His regular Sunday Bible Class in the Central Mission Hall, at 3 p.m., was next on the programme.

Long before the hour of meeting, fully three hundred had gathered in the hall. The front seats were occupied by the inmates of the Old Women's Home, which he was instrumental in establishing. Just before the platform were three invalid chairs, which had been wheeled into the hall, while in the audience could be seen