

Our English Letter.

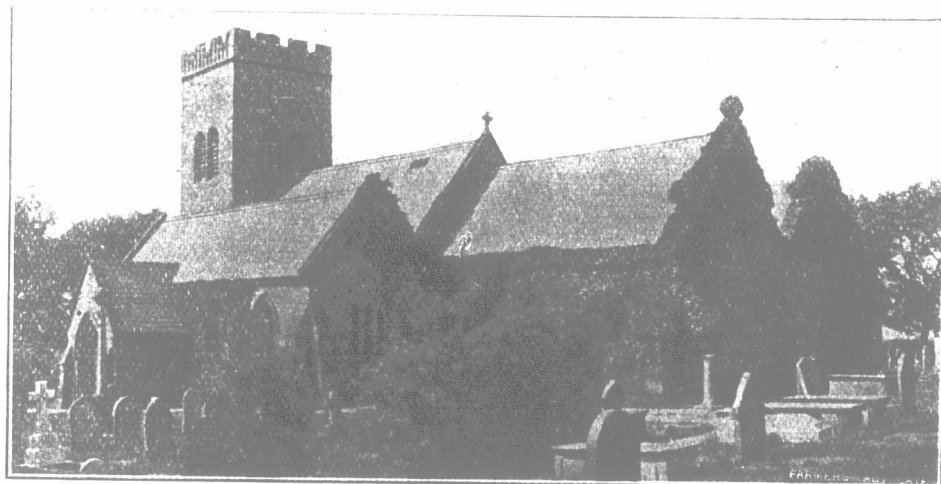
CONCERNING SOME LINKS.

Hoylelake, Cheshire.—My last letter had so much to tell of the great event of the week, the Irish Industries Exhibition, which brought so many celebrities to Liverpool, that it made but bare allusion to Hoylelake itself, or to its near neighbor, West Kirby. Since despatching it to "The Farmer's Advocate," I have done a little exploring, and come across several connecting links with Canada. At the parish church, on Sunday, it was given out that there would be a meeting of the Mothers' Union at the Fishermen's Mission Room the following afternoon, whereupon I introduced myself to the rector as a member of the Canadian branch of the Union, asking permission to attend, a permission readily granted, with the request added that at the conclusion of the address, which was to be given by a lady who had worked much in India with this very widespread and far-reaching organization, I should tell something of its early beginnings in, here and there, a corner of the Dominion. I need not say that I was glad to do this, and finding that first of all it was necessary to make it clear that, although Canada certainly was a part, and a very considerable part, too, of "America," and that we were as loyal subjects of the King as themselves, I mentioned the fact that I hailed from London, Ontario, and that, in a pleasant little chat with the Rev. Mr. Phillips, the clergyman of one of their churches, I found that once upon a time, as a young man, he had spent two years in London as a Professor in Hellmuth Boys' College, and that he held in very kindly regard many of the families who had then shown him much hospitality and kindness. The next link was a very unexpected one, and it came from the lady who had given a most beautiful and touching address upon the aims and objects of the Mothers' Union, as they affected the happiness of the homes in any land. "You mentioned London, Ontario," she said. "Why, I was born in it, although I was only six months old when I left it, my father being an officer of the 47th Regiment who had been stationed there." I met with my third link when exploring West Kirby. I had asked my way to the "old village," as it was called, to differentiate it, as well it might, from all the new and handsome residences which had grown around it of later years. "Which turning do I take for the Ring-o-Bells?" I asked. I knew it from a photograph, and soon found the quaint old hostelry in an angle of the village street, perched cornerwise, and with an almost arrogant assertion of its right to occupy any or all of the new-laid pavement, which had been laid down. And then came the link to Canada, inasmuch as it was at the "Ring-o-Bells" that J. L. Hatton composed that well-known rollicking old song, "Simon the Cellarer," and J. L. Hatton was, as is well known in Canada, the father of Mrs. Moore, of London, Ontario, whose name, for so many years, was associated with the nautical art and culture of that Province. Amongst the photographs I hope to send with this letter will be that of the Ring-o-Bells, as well as another of a curious old inn at Hoylelake, which also projects into the roadway with the same aggressiveness as its comrade a few miles away. With this hostelry there is even less of concession to the advanced thought of the day, an almost haunting in the very face of the temperance workers of the present century that it has nothing to do with them, for its sign bears, as it probably has borne for ages, the style and title of "The Punch Bowl." It is only fair to add that both places seem most respectably conducted, with an air of simple hospitality, inviting to the quiet

wayfarer on a walking tour, or one wanting bed and board for a short holiday. Indeed, in my ten days of residence in this little seaside nook, between the Mersey and the Dee, I have seen no instance of intoxication, nor of women or little children slipping in or out of the side door to bar-room or tavern, a custom which we in Canada are told has worked such woe in the lives and homes of the struggling classes of the dear old land.

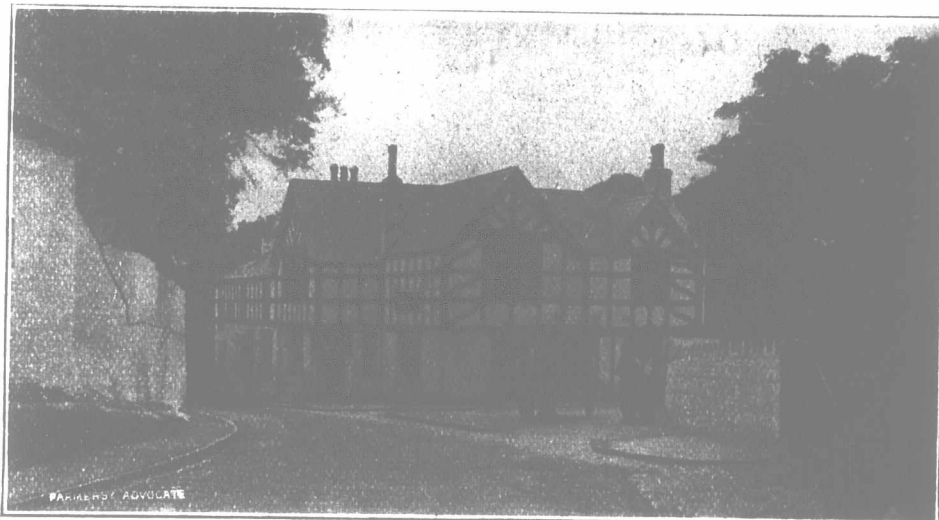
The parish church of West Kirby,

West Kirby grammar school that the early education began of a man, honored by all Canadians, and who, after long years of devotion to his life-work, has but lately passed to his rest, at the truly ripe old age of 91, namely, Archbishop Bond, Primate of the Church of England in Canada. There is a very touching allusion to these early days of their distinguished grammar-school "old boy" in the obituary notice of a Deeside newspaper: His father, an officer in H. M. Army, "a solemn,



Parish Church, West Kirby.

(Attended by the late Primate Bond of Canada during his boyhood)



"Ring-o-Bells."

(Where J. L. Hatton composed the song, "Simon the Cellarer.")



A Quaint Old Inn at Hoylelake.

as it now stands, dates only from the late 15th century, but there are traces of a much earlier edifice upon the same site. The hand of the restorer is evident throughout, but its lych gate, its ivy-clad walls, its handsome porch, its fine traceried windows, its old gargoyles, its peace on God's acre, its surrounding buildings of parish schools, etc.; its tower, which may be seen from a distance, leave enough traces of the past to awaken a vivid interest.

And now comes in another link with Canada. It was in the old

austere man"; his mother, "Nancy Bennett, a sweet, pious woman." Of himself: "The little lad who every morning, bright and early, rain or shine, used to trudge from Hoylelake to the Caddy grammar school." It was recorded that "he was a true comrade, a friend to the weaker boys, of a chivalrous spirit, and excelling in all the athletic games of the day, and was popular alike with teachers and pupils." A noble tribute to a noble man. And here must end, for the present, my little chain of links.

H. A. B.

The Spirit of Christmas.

"Glory to God in the highest!" sang the angels o'er Judean hills; And to-day the same chorus is ringing: old earth 'neath its melody thrills. It falls on the hearts that are tender, young voices take up the refrain, While hearts that are happy and joyous re-echo the glorious strain. It falls on the hearts that are songless, on hearts that with earth-care are ripe, And chords that long have been silent, awake and vibrate with life.

Oh, ye who are burdened and weary, and ye who are lonely and sad, The heavenly minstrelsy bids you—in the name of the Christ-child—be glad; Bow before Him in sweet adoration, while your voices in melody raise: Open wide to the spirit of Christmas—the free, joyous spirit of Praise.

"Peace on Earth!" Oh, methinks that I hear it, floating down through the morning's soft haze, While the shepherds stood gazing above them, in wondering and raptured amaze. "Peace on Earth!" like a pure benediction, fell that song on this world of unrest, While our "Prince of Peace" slumbered unconscious, a Babe on His young mother's breast. The glad Christmas tide is still bearing its message to you and to me, Now that "peace which passeth all knowledge" is our heritage, blood-bought and free.

Oh, ye hearts that ever are restless, with yourself or your fellows at strife, And ye who are seeking—but vainly—for peace in the things of this life, Listen now to the will of "Our Father," let striving and wandering cease: Open wide the spirit of Christmas; the beautiful spirit of Peace.

"Goodwill unto men!" sang the angels, low-bending that first Christmas morn, While the long-promised star shone resplendent, o'er the place where the Christ-child was born. Still down through the ages 'tis ringing, as tender and love-fraught as when The best that all heaven could offer, God gave in His "goodwill to men!"

Oh, then if the year that is passing has given you blessings in store, In His dear name give gladly and freely dispense to the needy and poor; Give kind words, give smiles, give brightness, give the best that your heart can afford, And whether to stranger or loved one, give all in the name of the Lord. Oh, give to the messenger-angels, good tidings to carry above; Open wide to the spirit of Christmas; the pure Christ-like spirit of Love.

—M. Carrie Hayward.

Christmas Ballad.

Good Christmas bells, I pray you
Ring him back to me;
For I am in the village,
And he is on the sea.

And out beyond the harbor
The surf is playing white;
Good Christmas bells, I pray you,
Ring him home to-night.

The reef beyond the harbor
Is girt with hungry foam;
Good Christmas bells, I pray you,
Ring my sailor home!

The lighthouse in the harbor
Burns clear, and keen, and still;
But a sound is in the village,
A voice is on the hill:

The voice of distant surges,
And he is on the sea—
Good Christmas bells, I pray you,
Ring him back to me!

—A. B. de Mille, in "Treasury of Canadian Verse."