

Our Contributors.

CONCERNING THE USE OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY KNOXONIAN.

A good illustration is a fine thing in discourse. It awakens interest, lets in the light, clinches an argument, sends home an appeal, and is very likely to remain in the memory when every other thing in the discourse has fled. One or two real good illustrations redeem a dull sermon. Many a sermon that has been voted dull by even the good people who heard it would have been voted "splendid" by everybody, had the preacher rolled up the blinds here and there as he went along, and let in a blaze of light in the form of a good illustration of some kind. We say *some* kind, for there are a great many kinds, and all are good when they do good.

There are a few preachers in this world who condemn the use of illustrations. Usually they are men who cannot make or use a good figure. Preachers are too much given to the abominable habit of belittling what they cannot do. If a lawyer sees his brother of the bar do some exceptionally clever thing, he generally has sense enough to remain silent, or praise the performance and credit it to his profession. Some preachers pursue just the opposite course. They cannot see a brother do a good thing without sneering at it, or in some way trying to belittle it. The greatest sinner in this way is Dr. Dry-as-dust. He never uses an illustration himself. He doesn't know how. If he did try, he would suggest an elephant going through a quadrille. When he hears a brother using discourse, well lighted up, and sent home with good illustrations, he tries to screw up his countenance into a shape that will suggest the profound, the patronizing and the pitiful in combination. His countenance having taken on this triple cast he says "Shallow," "popular," "sensational," "nothing in it." The front of the preacher's offending was that he spoke so as to be understood and felt. Had he spoken in a manner that few could understand, and none remember, Dr. Dry-as-dust would have said he was a very able preacher. The Dr. Dry-as-dusts are chiefly to be found in the western part of this Province.

Dr. A. A. Hodge, who went home to his reward the other day, was highly gifted in the use of illustrations. We shall not insult the memory of the great Princetonian by making any comparison between his attainments and those of the Dry-as-dust clerical family. The Rev. John Hutchins, evidently an appreciative student of Dr. Hodge's, gives some fine examples in the *Christian-at-Work* of the happy manner in which the professor could strike off a good illustration on the spur of the moment. Here is one:

At one time our subject was the theology of the transcendental Schleiermacher. As the lecture in its more formal part was over, one of the young men asked: "Then, Dr. Hodge, should you recommend Schleiermacher's teachings as good and helpful?" The Doctor in answer made reference to the materialism of Germany, pointed out how the almost mystic teachings of the great philosopher might have been of great good for his own German people, when they would not be so for England or America, and then concluded by saying: "It is something the case of the ladder in the pit. We are passing through a meadow, let us say, where we come upon a deep pit. In the bottom you see mire and filth, while against the sides a ladder rests. You say to me, 'Doctor, is it a good thing to have that ladder there?' I should answer, 'That depends entirely upon what purpose you would put it to. If men have stumbled into the pit, and the ladder serves to help them get out, then it is surely a good thing. But if it should only be there to lead men who are on dry ground into the pit it would manifestly not be a good thing.'"

To say anything about that happy illustration would be to spoil it. Let the ladder stand. If you are in any kind of moral or theological pit use almost any kind of ladder to help you out, but if you are out stay out.

An incident, taken from one's own personal experience, if done with good taste, is often the most telling form of illustration. The same writer gives the following account of the manner in which Doctor Hodge dealt with a young Methodist student who had worried him for a time by interjecting "amens" during prayer, and who "kicked" a little against his teacher's theory of Predestination:

When, for instance, the class had in hand the great theme of Predestination, there was some mental kicking manifested, especially on the part of the young man who had given vent to the frequent "amens." "Why, then, Dr. Hodge," he exclaimed, "everything is shut up. Things are only as they have to be, and that is the end of it."

An amused twinkle played about the Doctor's eyes for a

moment, when he replied: "You put me in mind of a lady in my first congregation. It was in Virginia, and she was an Episcopalian, but of that stamp belonging peculiarly to the region. Being a frequent attendant on my own services, she asked me to call. I did so, and in the course of a very pleasant conversation she remarked: 'Mr. Hodge, I like your preaching, but I don't like your doctrine.' I said to her: 'Thank you, madame, you do me great honour. And may I enquire why it is that you do not like my doctrine?' 'Oh, well,' she replied, 'you believe that whatever is to be will be.' 'And would you, dear madame,' I replied, 'would you have me believe that whatever is to be won't be?'"

Among English-speaking men the best illustrators are Irishmen and Americans. Having given two happy examples from one of America's most distinguished sons, let us take one from an illustrious Irishman. Dr. Cooke had occasion once to speak in the Belfast Presbytery of a book that was in some way or another under consideration. He criticised the book unfavourably, and ended his remarks by saying that he had not read it all. A youthful brother present thought this was a very inconsistent thing for the Doctor to do, and censured him for condemning a book, all of which he had not read. Cooke took the young man in hand in a style something like this. My young friend thinks I do something improper when I criticise unfavourably a book I have not read. I hope to be able to convince him that I am acting quite fairly, and in order to do so will use an illustration. Supposing some one wished to learn my friend's opinion on the quality of a pot of potatoes, *would it be necessary for him to eat the whole pot?*

We had a good many more things to say, but time is up, and this contributor must say good-bye to his friends for another week.

THE McALL MISSION IN FRANCE

Has now been fifteen years in existence, having been commenced in 1871 by an English clergyman and his wife. Its chief field of labour is amongst the working classes, who are liable to be infected by socialistic and communistic doctrines. The first meeting was held in a room in Belleville, in the north of Paris; and now there are fifty stations scattered over the city, and twenty in the suburbs, many of them open nightly and two or three times on Sunday. From Paris, the work has spread to many of the cities of France; Marseilles having nine stations, Bordeaux, five, Lyons, four, and other cities one or two, and even in Algiers the work has been begun.

This mission is entirely undenominational. It forms no Churches, all Protestant Churches reaping its fruits. British Christians, belonging to established and non-established Churches, sympathize with and aid it. The Protestant pastors of France are beginning to realize its beneficent effects, and help to conduct the meetings in their respective parishes—and have themselves derived no little benefit from seeing its operations.

The McAll Mission, by its direct, simple and affectionate addresses, frequent singing of popular hymns, and kindly recognition on the part of Mr. McAll and his assistants, have filled every *salle* with men and women, some of whom were in the habit of frequenting taverns and places of worse repute. Many have become entirely changed in character, and not a few have avowed themselves believers in Christ. The pastors have thus had lessons which are making them more popular and more efficient workers.

All controversial subjects, civil and ecclesiastical, are strictly forbidden in these meetings; the truth is presented clearly by some striking anecdote, parable or story, suited to the mental capacity of those present. Permission, therefore, is given by the authorities to open *salles* everywhere, and only men and money are needed to evangelize in hundreds of towns throughout the country.

France, of all papal lands, is perhaps the most hopeful and strategic for missionary work. What France has done in Tahiti, in Tonquin, in Madagascar and in the New Hebrides, shows what it is in her power to do, in the way of injuring or preventing the work of Christian missions. "To gain the Continent would be to gain the world," was once said by a distinguished friend of missions. But lower ground may be taken, and still a powerful argument be used for the evangelization of France, when we say that if France is not gained, she can seriously impede, if not destroy, missionary work in many lands.

THE CANADIAN AUXILIARY

of the McAll Mission was formed a year ago in To-

ronto, and has held monthly meetings in different churches. Subscriptions have been received from friends in the city, and from others in the country, which have been forwarded to Mr. McAll for the general objects of the mission. The time has now come when it has been judged better to support a particular station, to be known as the "Canadian Station." This is done by several cities in the United States, and Mr. McAll approves of the plan, and has suggested La Rochelle and Rochefort, on the Atlantic coast, as suitable for the purpose. La Rochelle has long been famous amongst all who sympathize with Huguenot traditions. The first confession of faith of the Reformed Church, drawn up in 1559, was called the "Confession of La Rochelle." It became the bulwark of Protestantism, and the refuge for persecuted pastors and laymen in the sixteenth century, and in 1573 the city withstood for a year the combined attacks of the French armies, the inhabitants, both men and women, performing prodigies of valour. Of course since those days, great changes have taken place in La Rochelle, most of the people having relapsed into coldness and indifference. Mr. McAll is trying to revive their ancient faith, and to implant principles which will arouse their ancient courage. Will not the Christian people of Canada aid him in this work, and furnish him with the means, about \$1,000, to defray the yearly expenses of both these stations? We are confident they will, and we appeal to clergymen and laymen of all Protestant denominations to make known this mission amongst their friends, and what the Canadian Auxiliary proposes to do. Contributions will be received and acknowledged by Mrs. Edward Blake, president; Miss Carty, secretary, 221 Jarvis Street; Miss Caven, 238 Victoria Street; Mrs. Welton, McMaster Hall, and Miss Copp, 76 Isabella Street, Toronto.

CHURCH OPENING.

MR. EDITOR,—Your numerous readers will be delighted to know that the good people of Gananoque have been up and doing. Gananoque, though an old settled place, immediately opposite the Thousand Islands, a great summer resort, beautiful scenery, healthful and pleasant, is a growing manufacturing town, having all the modern improvements of the age; but best of all, its Churches are growing and keeping abreast of the place. As it was in the heart of David "to build an house unto the name of the Lord God of Israel," so the people of St. Andrew's Church here have had it in their hearts to enlarge their Church. Our beloved pastor (Rev. H. Gracey) called a meeting of the congregation, and in a carefully prepared statement, showed us that if those who really belonged to our own families all came to church at one service, at least seventy would be without seats. As the first hope of a repentant sinner is his need of a Saviour, so our needs led us to prosecute the work of enlarging the church, and the matter was taken up with glad hearts and willing minds. A subscription list was circulated, and the handsome sum of \$4,500 promised, which was afterward increased, as the work progressed, by an additional \$400, making in all nearly \$5,000, a very handsome sum for a small congregation. Plans were prepared by Mr. Robert Gage, architect, formerly of Kingston, now Riverside, in Southern California, and the plan adopted was taking out the two sides, and extending each side twelve feet, affording additional seating capacity of 200, preserving the symmetry of the building, and giving the best possible form (cruciform shape). The contract for the entire work was let to Mr. George Wilson, for masonry, woodwork and painting, the price being \$4,500. Work was begun on the 6th September, 1886, and on the 6th of March, 1887, the church was opened for service, precisely six months intervening.

As usual, one improvement suggests or necessitates another. When Mr. Wilson's contract was nearing completion, in order to make the new work harmonize with the old, it was deemed necessary to fresco the whole, and a contract was made with Mr. Richardson, of Belleville, who understands his business, and did his work very neatly. The next improvement suggested was the upholstering of the seats, the old seats having been done years ago. A contract was made with Mr. A. McCrae, one of our members, for upholstering, and the new work and material presented so much contrast to the old, the ladies of the congregation resolved to have the old seats re-covered, and Mr. McCrae's services were continued until the whole was