

Our Contributors.

ONE OF THE DISTINGUISHED PREACHERS THAT LEFT US.

BY KNOXIAN.

The first thing that strikes one on reading the Autobiography of the late Dr. Donald Fraser is, that Donald Fraser, as Dr. Dykes and nearly everybody else calls him, in the autobiography seems entirely different from Donald Fraser as he appeared in the pulpit, or in the Church courts or on the platform. The style of the living man and the style of the sketch he makes of his life and work seem very unlike each other. The man was picturesque, the autobiography is as plain and destitute of ornament as Dr. Gregg's Short History. In the pulpit and on the platform the style of the man, especially in his younger days, was highly dramatic; the sketch he makes of himself is as artless as anything in good literature can be. And yet no doubt those who enjoyed the privilege of being on the list of Donald Fraser's friends, can see all through the seventy pages of his autobiography, the "personal and characteristic touches" which, as Dr. Dykes says in the preface, constitute the charm of the sketch.

The sketch has undoubted charms. It is candid, it is honest, it is human. The reader sees at the start a brave motherless boy entering the University of Aberdeen in his twelfth year, taking honours in Greek, Latin and Philosophy, and graduating as a Master of Arts at sixteen. No claim is set up for youthful genius or early seriousness. He tells us that he did not learn to drink, or swear, or gamble, or play cards, but he candidly confesses that he spent much time in "sheer boyish levity and fun" and gave a "good many evenings to the theatre."

Lest some fond parent who reads these lines may want to send his hopeful to college at twelve, we say here, by way of parentheticals that Dr. Fraser thought he went to the college classes "far too young" to profit by them.

About the time that the future pulpit orator went to Aberdeen, his home in Inverness was broken up and his father emigrated to Canada, and began Canadian life in Sherbrooke. Like every other ambitious boy, he had to choose a profession, and making choice was no easy matter. His father wanted him to be a minister; but Donald at that time did not incline that way. He had a liking for the Bar, but the law found no favour in the parental eyes and as his father was three thousand miles away, there was little opportunity to discuss the matter. His love for the legal profession seems to have clung to him through life, for at the time he wrote the Autobiography he tells us that he never heard a case in court without wanting "to enter the arena and plead." Had he chosen the legal profession possibly the last few years would have seen him Lord Advocate of Scotland, helping Gladstone to pass the Home Rule Bill.

After due consideration the future pastor of Cote street, resolved to go into business, not because he liked business or knew much about it, but because he wanted to make money so that he could "cultivate literary tastes and pleasures." In 1842 he sailed for Canada and nearly ended his career in the ocean. The ship was a poor one and went down on the return voyage, being the first of seven vessels lost, on the very next voyage after Donald Fraser had crossed the Atlantic in them.

Arrived in Canada, young Fraser visited his father in Sherbrooke and then went to learn business with a firm near Toronto, drawing no salary. Perhaps some correspondent of the Presbyterian can give us the name of the place "near Toronto," in which the future divine tried to learn. Wherever it was, he did not remain long, for we soon find him a book keeper in a commission merchant's office in Montreal. He rose rapidly here and became a junior partner; but he tells us the concern was "shaky," and soon afterwards lost the

"few hundred his kind father had given him," and he went out of business never to return. The Master had other business for him to do, and the servant, contrary to his own wishes, was being prepared for his life work.

"During this period," he says, "the grace of God firmly apprehended me." Nothing in any biography or autobiography we have ever seen, surpasses in modesty and in clearness, the account he gives in one short sentence, of his conversion. "I fell down helpless before God, and his free grace saved me through faith in the Lord Jesus. My thoughts now took a new direction. 'My life was changed.' How some men would have drawn out their description of a change or that kind. How they would have elaborated the details and told us what they felt and perhaps not a little that they never felt at all. It was enough for Donald Fraser to say, 'I fell down helpless before God, and his free grace saved me through faith in the Lord Jesus.' May the great Power above send us more conversions like Donald Fraser's. His description of it is short; but his life work that followed was long and blessed. Too often it is the other way. The story of the conversion is long, but the results, so far as human eye can see, might easily be written on your finger nail.

But even then, Donald Fraser did not rush into the ministry, as too many do under the senseless notion, that to be a good Christian and a useful man one must be a preacher. He did think that the Lord meant by disappointments in business to lead him into the ministry, but he hesitated to enter lest people should say he entered for a livelihood, having failed in other directions. He made arrangements to become editor of a daily newspaper; but Christian friends in Montreal who knew his ability, prevailed upon him to enter Knox College, and there for the present we must leave him. The story of his life has, however, so many useful lessons that we shall make no apology for coming back to it perhaps more than once.

Though not in a critical mood, we cannot help expressing a little surprise that a man like Donald Fraser should have written that he "entered the John Knox Theological College at Toronto." We notice that some English journals in their criticism of the Autobiography, reproduce that name. The original name of the institution was, we believe, "Knox's College," but in the last Act of Incorporation, it was designated Knox College.

WHAT CAN WOMAN DO?

REV. W. S. M'TAVISH, B. D., ST. GEORGE.

It has sometimes been said, and said sneeringly, that women make the best Christians and most acceptable Christian workers because the Gospel is adapted only to women and weak-minded men. But we can afford to fling back the taunt into the teeth of him who utters it. He who gives expression to such a sentiment overlooks two very important considerations. In the first place, he overlooks the fact that Christianity has been championed by some of the strongest-minded men who ever lived—championed by men of the brightest intellect, the soundest judgment, the most penetrating insight and the most accurate scholarship. In the second place, he overlooks the fact that some women have shown splendid examples of courage, heroism, endurance and pains-taking investigation. Though her father shrank back from the task, Grace Darling was not afraid to set out from the Longstone lighthouse to rescue the drowning passengers and crew of the Forfarshire. Elizabeth Fry went unprotected and alone among 160 of the very worst type of prisoners in the Newgate prison, and almost revolutionized the condition of things there. Isabella of Spain comprehended, and sympathized with, the plans of Columbus—plans which many of the ablest men of that age pronounced impracticable. Caroline Herschel, sister of the great astronomer, performed drudgeries of calculation to assist him; she also made independent

investigations. Some one has said, "If Lincoln set free the slaves, Harriet Beecher Stowe loosened the rivets."

The heathen, Libanius, the enthusiastic admirer of the old Greek culture, pronounced an involuntary eulogy on woman, when he said, as he looked at the mother of Chrysostom, "What splendid women the Christians have."

What then can woman do for the cause of Christianity—a cause which has done so much for her?

Her first and special work lies in the home circle. Now that Christianity has given woman a sanctified home it is her duty to make the most of it. She can make that home attractive. She can comfort her husband in his hours of sorrow, she can cheer him in times of despondency. Many a husband could truthfully say, as Bismark often did regarding his wife, "You have no idea what she has made of me."

Into a new and happier life Dr. Holland was led by his wife. Soon after the death of her who had been an inspiration to him he wrote:—

"Chastened, bowed, subdued,
I kissed the rod that smote me, and
exclaimed,
'The Lord hath given; the Lord hath taken
away,
And blessed be His name.'"

And in closing the book which he had written to her memory, he said:—

"So here I give
The Gospel of her precious Christian life;
I owe it to herself and to the world,
Grateful for all her tender ministry in life
and death."

But it is probable that, as mother, woman wields the most powerful influence. There she has the advantage that she has not to reform a character, but to mould one. It is no small matter to train a child. The mother may fancy that she is only rocking the cradle but she is rocking eternal destinies. It is in the nursery that the first impressions are to be made upon those who are to be the ministers and missionaries of the future.

The influence of such women as Lois, Eunice, Monica, and Susanna Wesley, will never die. Robert Pollock, in speaking of his book, "The Course of Time," remarked "That book has my mother's divinity in it."

But beyond the home circle there is much that woman can do for the cause of Christianity. She can do much in the Sabbath School, in social gatherings, in visiting the sick and in calling upon families recently come within the bounds of the congregation.

In the cause of missions there is a grand field for exercise of her talents. Already a glorious work has been accomplished by such women as Miss Flisk, Miss Ferguson, Miss Bliss, Miss Abbie, Miss Murray as well as by the many Canadian ladies whose names are more or less familiar to us all.

Some mothers who could not go to be missionaries themselves have encouraged their children to go. When Fidella Fliske drove 30 miles through great snow-drifts to tell her mother that she was anxious to go as a missionary to Persia, her mother said, "Go, my child, go." When John Wesley was asked to go to Georgia, and preach to the settlers and Indians there, his mother not only gave her free consent but added, "If I had a hundred sons I would be glad to see them all engaged in such blessed work, although I might see them no more in this world."

Those who cannot go and labour in foreign lands are doing a great work in the W. F. M. S. Auxiliaries. There is, perhaps, no organisation in modern times that has done more to arouse a missionary interest where it was on the wane, to diffuse missionary intelligence throughout our congregations, to provide means for the prosecution of missionary enterprises than the Auxiliaries of the W. F. M. S. At their meetings, prayers for the success of missions are offered up; papers are read; contributions are given; clothing is prepared for the destitute, and the tenor of the meeting is calculated to keep before the Church the last injunction of her ascending Lord—"Go ye, therefore, into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

It was a happy thought to enlist in this work those who are known as "Scattered helpers." In almost every congregation there are some who, by reason of distance, or home ties, are prevented from attending the monthly meetings, and yet they are now made to feel that they have become sharers in this great and glorious work.

THE WORLD FOR CHRIST.

BY GEO. W. ARMSTRONG, LONDON.

This is the "motto" of the W.F.M. Society of our beloved Presbyterian Church, and the prayer of every devout servant of the Master is: May He hasten it in His own good time. Those who were privileged to look on while the godly women of our Church were in convention must have been struck with the spirit of earnest zeal animating every woman present. The ladies have left behind them two imperishable impressions: first that they have a holy purpose and will not give up until it is accomplished. This was the practical effect of their meeting. The second is private and domestic—our homes have been blessed by their presence. Some people say these conferences are too large. As far as London is concerned the impression created is, that everything connected with the W. F. M. Society is large and will yet be larger. The result of the work during the past year, financially considered sums up to nearly \$50,000. What would the Church or the world do without such efforts? The ladies are the "cream" of our congregations, the "elect precious" of our Churches, and it will be a sorry day for our Church when it puts on the "brake" and tries to check the impulsive ardour of our lady workers because of a little extra trouble needed to provide homes for all who come. The homes receiving the delegates are fully compensated for the trifling trouble by the presence in their midst for a short time of such sterling Christian workers.

The meeting during the past week in London has stimulated thought and activity and has confirmed the opinion that the world will sooner or later be redeemed to God. This cannot possibly be doubted by any who believe in the divinity of Scripture teaching. That the spread of this word of reconciliation has under God, been entrusted to the faithful and devout followers of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—both male and female—is equally beyond the region of doubt. Nothing is more clearly revealed in the volume of inspiration. That to a very large extent the world lies in the arms of that wicked one, is beyond doubt. That the Church is not fully alive to its duty is also a deplorable fact, though somewhat improving, as the late cheering conference shows. That the resources of the Church, both personal and material, are not as fully employed, or as judiciously utilized as they might be, is sadly true. That the Church indulges in ecclesiastical luxuries at home, and only gives the crumbs that fall from its well supplied tables, to the evangelization of our race and to feed the starving millions of our planet, is a fact as discreditable as it is true. It is undeniably true that if the world is to be won for Christ the Church will have to adopt more energetic, more economical, more self-sacrificing and more benevolent measures to bring it about. When that time comes there will be no desire to quibble as to whether the membership fee for such a society as the W. F. M. Society shall be one dollar or one quarter, but will be rather to increase than to decrease the amount.

Of all service, personal service is the most acceptable to God. Every Christian should be a "living sacrifice," and the duty of the Church is to find a sphere of work for every member admitted into its communion, and there is work for everyone to do. There should be no drones in the Christian life. An inactive, indolent Christian is an anomaly. The sole duty of many, yea, the bulk of professing Christians seems to be receiving and not doing good. In many Christian families there are members of the household who are