

THE REV. JOHN McNEILL.

Many people will be interested in knowing that the Rev. John McNeill is not a pure Scot, and that Scotland cannot take the full credit for her talented son. To be sure, he was born in Scotland, and his mother was of Highland descent, but his father was an Irishman from the county Antrim. Mr. McNeill is proud of the fact that he comes of poor and honest parents. Not "poor but honest," as many are fond of putting it, as though to be poor usually meant to be wicked too; that idea he always laughs at. His father was a quarry man at Houston, and later on a foreman at Inverkip, a beautiful village on the Firth of Clyde. He is remembered as possessing a quick wit and racy humor and as being quite at home in addressing evangelistic meetings, so that his wit and humor are evidently not the only characteristics which have descended to his son. He died in June, 1889. The following tribute to his memory is by his daughter Kate:

"He left us naught that could be sold,
We will not fight about his gold;
But all that strengthens for the strife,
And leads us to the higher life—
All that we know of peace and gladness,
Solace true in hours of sadness;
Great deliverance from the devil's snares
Has come in answer to our father's prayers."

John McNeill was born at Houston, Renfrewshire, on July 7, 1854.

"After a plain but thorough common school education, says an English paper, we find young McNeill, at the age of sixteen, acting as ticket clerk, railway porter, and making himself generally useful at the small station of Inverkip. 'I began life in the railway service,' he once said, 'and it taught me all the best lessons of my life.' It was here while coupling wagons that he had a narrow escape, the buffers having nipped his fingers. Promotion, or at least a change of duties, came after three years' service, for we find him second booking clerk at the Caledonian station, Cathcart street, Greenock. Then came a removal to the Caledonian railway office, in Princes-street, Edinburgh, where, not receiving the assistance in his duties which he felt he needed, he made another move over to the service of the North British as clerk in the General Superintendent's office. When nineteen he had declared himself on the Lord's side, and it was at this period that he distinguished himself for the interest he took in the Young Men's Christian Association, St. Andrew street. His power as a public speaker was unmistakable, and it was the impression made on Dr. Whyte and Mr. W. J. Duncan, manager of the National Bank, which destined his career. His mother was consulted as to this important step. 'I never told you,' she said, with quivering lip, 'but I meant you for that from the first.'

"Arrangements were made whereby he entered Edinburgh University in 1877, and remained for three years; four years more were spent in the Glasgow Free College. While at college he acted as a missionary in connection with Free St. Bernard's, Edinburgh, and while in his last session at college he took an important step in life, which many would have declared highly imprudent—he got married. Mrs. McNeill, who belonged to Gavington, Berwickshire, died in London on the 7th of July last. Thus was the ministry of Mr. McNeill in London beclouded by an inexpressible sorrow.

"We next find Mr. McNeill in charge of a mission at Glenboig, near Glasgow, where, like Mr. Spurgeon, he indulged in open-air preaching, and gained experience in his work amongst the poor, to fit him for his more important work in life. The little brick church at Glenboig was crowded; he gained the affections of the people, and there was fruit of his ministry which only the great day shall declare. In 1886 he accepted the pastorate of the McCrie Roxburgh Free Church, Edinburgh, which rapidly filled with an eager and attentive auditory. In his later ministry there, the circus in Nicholson street would be packed on Sabbath evenings by 4,000 men and women gathered from all parts of the city. A hearer at one of his week-night services describes him as the Scotch Spurgeon—a well-built, dark complexioned, full bearded West of Scotland man, of about thirty years of age. He is quite at ease in the pulpit, and his reading of the opening psalm and the chapter show his original methods. You feel that he has himself

realized the truth he is preaching, that it possesses him, and, like a fire in his bones, must find utterance. In the Metropolitan Tabernacle he has had over 6,000 hearers; at the Central Hall, Holborn, and Exeter Hall, he is popular also; and he once spoke for one hour and forty minutes to an audience in St. Andrew's Hall, Glasgow.

"In January, 1889, the permission of the Edinburgh Free Presbytery was granted for Mr. McNeill's removal to London as pastor of Regent square church. He left many sad hearts in Edinburgh on his removal. He is the very man that London needs. His freshness of feeling, illustrations, anecdotes, and intense earnestness recommend the Gospel to the careless and godless, and hold up and edify the saints of God. His sermons, like those of Mr. Spurgeon, are issued weekly, at the price of one penny.

"He felt strangely drawn toward London as the centre of this great moving world of men, with all their mundane and extra-

ordinary to Scotland to work in connection with Mr. Moody. The following extract from his farewell sermon shows with sufficient clearness his reasons for so doing.

His text was 1st Chronicles xii. 22—"For at that time day by day there came to David to help him until it was a great host, like the host of God."

"He had come amongst them," he said, "preaching about David, and he would leave them doing the same. Christ was the David of to-day. Religion on its practical side meant that they were come to help David. But helping David caused great searchings of heart. If they helped the Lord as little as they helped the minister, then they were not of much account. They need not come to the prayer-meeting and whine and whine for the Lord to send another man after his own heart if they were going to treat him as they had treated the men who already had had to rule over them. He did not speak of himself personally, for, so far as anybody could see,

thank God for their minister's farewell address. Might they be able to say that it made them hang their heads in shame and ask what loafers they had been. They might have criticised, grumbled and complained, but might they be able to say that McNeill's last bolt sped home and laid them low. He was going to Scotland to help David. If his lips should be sealed in death immediately afterwards, he would be satisfied if God only gave the opportunity of serving him day by day for a whole year."

SIGNING THE FARM AWAY.

Fine old farm, for a hundred years
Kept in the family name;
Cornfields rich with golden ears
Oft as the harvest came.
Crowded barn and crowded bin,
And still the loads kept crowding in—
Rolling in for a hundred years;
And the fourth in the family line appears.

Orchard covered the slopes of the hill;
Cider—forty barrels, they say—
Sure in season to come from the mill;
To be tasted round Thanksgiving Day.
And they drank as they worked, and they
drank as they ate,
Winter and summer, early and late,
Counting it as a great mishap
To be found "without a barrel on tap."

But, while the seasons crept along,
And passions into habits grew,
Their appetites became as strong,
As ever a drunkard knew.
And they labored less and they squandered
more,
Chiefly for rum at the village store,
Till called by the sheriff one bitter day,
To sign the homestead farm away.

The father shattered and scented with rum,
The mother, sick and pale and thin,
Under the weight of her sorrows dumb,
In debt for the bed she was dying in;
Oh, I saw the wrecked household around her
stand—

And the justice lifted her trembling hand,
Helping her as in her pain she lay,
To sign the homestead farm away.

Ah, how she wept! And the flood of tears
Swept down her cheeks, once fair;
And the father, already bowed with years,
Bowed lower with despair.
Drink! Drink! It has ripened into woe
For them and all they loved below,
And forced them poor, and old and gray,
To sign the homestead farm away.

Oh, many scenes have I met in life,
And many a call to pray;
But the saddest of all was the drunkard's
wife

Signing the farm away;
Home, once richest in all the town,
Home in that fatal cup poured down,
Worse than fire's or flood's dismay—
Drunkard signing the farm away!

—Rev. W. W. Cochrane in Union Signal.

A FEW FACTS.

Mrs. Mary K. Rankin, superintendent of narcotics for Illinois, has prepared a strong memorial to the committee on temperance of the Presbyterian Church, and sent copies to all the Presbyterian ministers, the clerks of sessions, and chairmen of temperance committees in the state. In it she brings out facts like these: The United States annually spends \$600,000,000 on tobacco and \$5,500,000 on foreign missions. The internal revenue reports show this alarming increase in the use of tobacco in 1890 over 1891: In cigars, 220,504,343; in cigarettes, 81,739,320; in pounds of smoking and chewing tobacco, 15,607,268. Many church members and officers are engaged in the manufacture and sale of tobacco. Eighty diseases are said to result from its use, and 20,000 deaths to occur annually in this country from its use. In view of these and other facts which she presents she asks that the Presbytery require all students preparing for the ministry, to be free from this vice; the students in military and naval academies are subject to this requirement, why should not those who are to preach the gospel be so likewise? Presbytery is requested to recommend to its ministers abstinence from the filthy thing; it is also requested to instruct its elders to forbear its use and to use their influence to banish it from the churches. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord."



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mundane and eternal concerns. When there, he felt carried along as in a railway train—not in a first, second, or third class carriage, but standing on the foot-plate of the rocking engine, where you hear the beating of its mighty heart. The young Scottish preacher, with less of culture and scholarship than his great predecessors in Regent square, Edward Irving, James Hamilton, and Dr. Dykes, has been warmly welcomed, and is fulfilling his mission with power and success. Says one who knows him, 'Success has justified this holy daring of Mr. McNeill, and responsive London has leaped up to welcome him with open arms. It delights in his splendid zeal, and in the freshness and power of his living message, and wherever his name is announced eager faces and responsive people crowd to hear him. Dramatic, witty, anecdotal, impassioned, the new preacher has stamped himself as a great evangelist for the multitude.'

Reading such words as the above, it is with mixed feelings that one turns to learn that he has resigned this charge and gone

their presence or their absence simply meant nothing. They had been standing in room that was meant for real live men. So it was while he was there, and so it was with his predecessors, and was it going to be the same with the man that was to come after him? Not if he could help it. It was simply a matter of moonshine whether they took what he said well or ill, whether they were offended or pleased. Nothing filled the minister's heart more tormentingly than to glance down the communion roll, and see the names of people who were there and nothing more. What had they done to help David? They might think he was rather hard on them in a farewell sermon. Perhaps the thing that should be done was to shed tears and be choking. He was concerned about the dead-heads that were not coming to help David. These were the men who were mightily concerned about what they called ministerial dignity. Let them confess, repent and retire. Although he was going away that was neither here nor there. The battle had to be fought. Might they live to