

## Our Contributors.

### SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF THE LATE REV. WILLIAM REID, D.D.

BY PROFESSOR GREGG.

Dr. Reid was born in Kildrummie, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, on the 10th December, 1816, and died in Toronto on the 19th January of the present year in the 80th year of his age. He was the youngest son in a large family. His father died while he was yet a child; but it was his privilege during his boyhood years to enjoy the training in the ways of religion of his pious widowed mother. At the early age of thirteen he became a student in King's College, Aberdeen, and when only seventeen obtained the degree of A.M. After one or two years spent by him as a tutor, he entered upon and completed his Theological course, also in Aberdeen. During the whole of his college career, he was a very diligent and successful student. He was distinguished by exact and extensive knowledge of Hebrew, Greek and Latin, while in Theology he was thoroughly grounded in the articles of faith exhibited in the Westminster Confession and catechisms.

While he was a student in Aberdeen, there were carried on in Scotland great controversies, in which he must have taken a deep interest. There was the famous voluntary controversy regarding the relations between Church and State in which the Established Church was assailed by those who deemed it sinful on the part of the Church to receive pecuniary aid from the State. Then there were vehement controversies within the Established Church, known as the Non-Intrusion and Anti-Patronage controversies, which resulted in the Disruption of 1843. In these latter controversies Dr. Reid doubtless felt a special interest for his native county, Aberdeen was, in a manner, a storm centre in these stirring times. There, in the Presbytery of Strathbogie, was the parish of Marnoch, in which had been commenced those proceedings which terminated in the forced settlement of a minister in defiance of the protest of almost the entire congregation. This, along with other forced settlements, served to illustrate the evils of the System of Patronage which had been imposed on the Church by the British Parliament in violation of the terms of union between England and Scotland.

In the midst of all these controversies the Rev. Alex. Duff, D.D., who had been sent by the Established Church as its first missionary to India, returned to Scotland, and by his burning eloquence in the supreme and subordinate courts of the Church, and by addresses throughout the length and breadth of the land, aroused to an unprecedented degree a feeling of interest in the cause of Foreign Missions. Theological students were fired with a new enthusiasm. Among others Dr. Reid was inspired with a strong desire to devote his life to missionary work in some foreign field. He was willing to go wherever he was sent by the Church. At this time there was in existence a missionary society, known as the Glasgow Missionary Society, organized in 1825, under the patronage of the Earl of Dalhousie, Governor-General of British North America, of which Society Dr. Robert Burns, minister in Paisley, and afterwards minister of Knox Church and Professor in Knox College, Toronto, was the most active and energetic secretary. This Society consisted of ministers and members of the Church of Scotland and its main design was to send missionaries of that Church to the North American colonies. From this Society Dr. Reid received an appointment as a missionary to Canada, then consisting of only the two Provinces now known as Ontario and Quebec. He was specially appointed to labour in the congregation of Grafton and Colborne.

Having been licensed as a preacher of the Gospel, in May, 1839, Dr. Reid left Scotland and arrived in Canada in September of the same year. He was then strong, vigorous and active, with great capacity for work; his eye beaming with intelligence, his heart burning with love to souls and loyalty to Christ. Previous to his arrival efforts had been made by the Presbyterian Synod in connection with the Church of Scotland, which had been organized in 1831, to secure a professor of Theology in King's College, Toronto, but, in consequence of Prelatic influences, these efforts proved unavailing. The Synod therefore resolved to establish a college similar to the colleges in Scotland. A meeting of members and adherents of the Church was held for this purpose in Kingston, on the 18th December, 1839. In this meeting, among others who took part, were Mr. John Mowat, father of Professor Mowat and of Sir Oliver Mowat, Premier of Ontario, and Mr. John A. MacDonald afterwards Sir John A. MacDonald, Premier of the Dominion. Dr. Reid also took part in this meeting and this was the beginning of his Canadian college work, his interest in which never flagged throughout his long and laborious life.

On the 30th January 1840, Dr. Reid was ordained minister of the congregation of Grafton and Colborne, in the Presbytery of Kingston, which was one of the six Presbyteries of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland. The year in which he was ordained is memorable as that in which a union was effected between the Church of Scotland Synod, and another Synod, the United Synod of Upper Canada, which had been originally organized in 1818 as the Presbytery of the Canadas, and the most of whose ministers had come from the Secession Churches of Scotland and Ireland. There were at this time the names of 60 ministers on the roll of the Church of Scotland Synod, and on the roll of the United Synod the names of 17 ministers. Of all these ministers, so far as known to the writer, not one now survives. The last two who died were the Rev. Thomas Alexander, in the 51st, and Dr. Reid in the 80th year of his age. Mr. Alexander took part in Dr. Reid's ordination in 1840 and was then minister of Cobourg. He died at Mount Pleasant, near Brantford, last December.

The year in which Dr. Reid was ordained is further memorable as that in which a final settlement, as was supposed, was arrived at of the controversy respecting the Clergy Reserves, which had been carried on for many years, and with great earnestness, between the Church of England, headed by Bishop Strachan, and the Church of Scotland under the leadership of the Hon. William Morris. The Church of England Clergy claimed to be the Protestant Clergy to whom belonged the Clergy Reserves. The Church of Scotland claimed to have an equal right to them. It was enacted that the English Church should have two-thirds and the Scotch Church one-third of the proceeds. But the settlement did not prove to be final, in spite of the protests of both the English and Scotch Churches, the Clergy reserves were secularized in 1854.

While minister of the congregation of Grafton and Colborne Dr. Reid extended his labors to several neighboring stations. He usually travelled 30 miles and preached three times each Sabbath, and, moreover, did much laborious mission work during week days. In the year 1849, he was translated from Grafton and Colborne to the congregation of Picton, in which he ministered till 1853. In both congregations his ministry is still affectionately remembered as that of a faithful and effective preacher of the Gospel who, exemplified, in his walk and conversation, the sanctifying power of the doctrines he taught. In the year previous to that of his translation to Picton, he was united in marriage to Miss M. A. Harriet Street, who all through the remainder of his life was a true help mate, sharing in his joys

and sorrows and, as far as possible, assisting him in all Christian work.

During the thirteen years of Dr. Reid's pastorate other events of great importance besides these mentioned were occurring in the Presbyterian Synod to which he belonged. Chief among these was the disruption of the Synod. Reference has already been made to the non-intrusion and anti patronage controversies which led to the disruption of the Established Church of Scotland in 1843. In these controversies the Presbyterians of Canada took a deep interest; they very generally sympathized with those who struggled for the spiritual independence of the Church, and who became organized as the Free Protestant Church of Scotland. When tidings of the disruption in Scotland were brought across the Atlantic there was great excitement in Canada, and when the Church of Scotland Synod met in July, 1844, there were keen discussions as to the relations to be sustained to the Free and Established Churches. Sixty eight ministers resolved to retain their connection with the Established Church, as in former years. Twenty three resolved to organize an independent Synod, assuming the name of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, but usually known as the Free Church because of its sympathy with the Free Church of Scotland. Dr. Reid felt it to be his duty to cast in his lot with the Free Church. It was with heartfelt sorrow that he and others parted from brethren for whom personally they felt sincere affection. On the other hand, there was deep regret on the part of those from whom they separated. This was pathetically expressed in the draft reply to the protest of the seceders. "Our brethren," they said, "have gone out from us. The parting has been sad, heart rendingly sad. With many of them we have taken sweet counsel. We have labored together, prayed together, and we have eaten of the same bread and drunk from the same cup at the sacred table. But now they have separated from us. We may still speak of each other as brethren, but alas! the name has not the meaning it once had."

After the disruption, Queen's College, in the establishment of which Dr. Reid had taken part in 1839, and which was opened for the reception of students in 1842, remained in possession of the Church of Scotland Synod. The Free Church then took steps to establish in Toronto what is now known as Knox College, which was opened for the reception of students on Nov. 1844, and in the whole history of which Dr. Reid took an active and influential part.

The Rev. William Rintoul, who was clerk of the Free Church Synod, resigned this office, and died in 1851. Dr. Reid, along with Mr. John Burns, was appointed to succeed him, but Mr. Burns died in 1853 and Dr. Reid then became sole Synod clerk. For the duties of this office he was peculiarly well fitted by his knowledge of Church law, by his sound judgment, accurate habits, and urbanity of manner. Mr. Burns had been not only joint clerk of the Synod but also General Agent of the Church and editor of the *Missionary Record*. Dr. Reid was appointed his successor in both offices. For the agency, he had no previous special training in business matters. But it was soon found and became more fully manifest as years advanced, and the duties of the office grew heavier and more complicated, that he was possessed of abilities qualifying him to take a high place as a merchant or a banker. For the office of editor he was also singularly well qualified by his wide and accurate knowledge, by his literary taste and skill, and by his sound judgment. He knew well not only what to publish, but also, what he ought not to publish. Both these qualifications, which are essential to good authorship or editorship, he possessed in a measure very seldom found. In consequence of his acceptance of the offices of editor and agent it became necessary that he should resign his pastoral charge which he accord-

ingly did in 1853. He then removed to Toronto where he resided till his death.

From the time of his entering upon his new work as agent and editor, the biography of Dr. Reid is, to a large extent, the history of Presbyterianism in Canada. But only a few particulars can now be given. After lengthened negotiations a union was effected, in 1861, between the Free Church Synod and the United Presbyterian Synod in Canada. The latter Synod was originally organized in 1834 as the Mission Presbytery of the Canadas in connection with the United Secession Church in Scotland. The United Church assumed the name of the Canada Presbyterian Church. With Dr. Reid was now associated as joint clerk of Synod, Dr. William Fraser, who had been clerk of the United Presbyterian Synod and who like Dr. Reid was distinguished by those high qualities which fitted him for the duties of his office. As the result of the union the colleges, missionary and other schemes of the two churches were amalgamated. The Divinity Hall of the one Synod was united with Knox College of the other. In addition to the missions formerly begun, new missionary operations were commenced and carried on with increasing vigour. Two new colleges were established, one in Montreal and another in Winnipeg. For all the colleges new buildings were erected and endowments secured. It is easy to understand how, in connection with these and other matters, the duties and responsibilities of Dr. Reid, who retained the offices of editor and agent, became more and more weighty and oppressive.

In the year 1875 was consummated the general Union of almost all the Presbyterians in the Dominion of Canada. At this time there were four leading branches of the Presbyterian Church in the Dominion. There were two in the Eastern Provinces—the Synod of the Lower Provinces constituted by the Union in 1860 and 1866 of what might be called the Free and United Presbyterian churches, and the Synod of the Maritime Provinces constituted in 1854 by the Union of the two churches in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in connection with the Church of Scotland. In the Western Provinces were the Church of Scotland Synod and the Canada Presbyterian Assembly. The Supreme Courts of these four branches of the Presbyterian family were united under the name of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Of this Assembly, in addition to Drs. Fraser and Reid, the much beloved, and accomplished Professor Macerras, of Queen's College, was appointed joint clerk. Of the Eastern Section of the Church, Dr. P. McGregor was appointed general agent, while the agency of the Western Section was continued in the hands of Dr. Reid. When the general union was effected, there were, in addition to the colleges in Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg already mentioned, the college of the Synod of the Lower Provinces in Halifax and two colleges of the Church of Scotland—Morin College in Quebec, and Queen's College in Kingston. Home and Foreign missionary operations were now as far as possible amalgamated and were carried on. In all departments remarkable progress was made. Within a period of sixteen years the number of communicants was doubled, extra congregational contributions were trebled, and contributions for all purposes rose from nearly one million to upwards of two million dollars. May it not be inferred from these external marks of progress that there has been a concurrent deepening of spiritual life?

During the years which have elapsed since the Union of 1875 Dr. Reid's cares and anxieties were greatly multiplied, and were felt pressing upon him more heavily, as old age and its infirmities were coming upon him, but still his mental vigour remained unabated, and his spiritual life unimpaired. It was truly said of him, in connection with the services at his funeral, by Professor McLaren, that what seemed to be secular