

Methodism." He died at sea, in 1814, while on board ship, bound for India, whither he was going as a missionary.

Dr. Fitchet, has given us a description of this remarkable man. "Coke was of an ardent and generous temperament, with something more than a touch of natural genius. He was a Welshman, short-necked, short-bodied, big-brained; a gentleman, a scholar, a man of means. He had a personal fortune of £1,200 a year. He was twice married and each wife brought him a fortune. He was an arid High Churchman until through Wesley's writings he entered into the hitherto unguessed and unattained possibilities of religion. He had all the fire and glow natural to the Welsh genius, and, religion, for him, became at once an ardent spiritual flame—a rebuke to colder spirits. * * * * There is something almost dramatically opportune in the appearance of Coke. He was not only the exact man wanted, but he appeared at exactly the right moment."

Asbury survived Coke two years. The thirty-two years that followed the historic Baltimore Conference, of 1784, were spent by him in incessant travels and toil. Lowell might have said of him as he did of Washington: "He filled up his years with work done squarely and unwasted days." "On the rough, vast floor of America he played the part of an Apostle without in the least suspecting himself to be one." In travel he outdid even John Wesley, for the conditions under which he worked were infinitely more difficult, and Asbury never enjoyed good health. Many a night was spent on the floor of a settler's cabin in fellowship with the seas, after a day of toilsome travel in the untracked forest. He began his labors without a penny in his pocket and his salary for the greater part of his life was less than £20 a year. He was a tall, thin, almost gaunt man; but his body had the toughness of steel. His was one of those minds that can find rest only in labor. He was designed for great work and was endowed with a restless instinct for it. As a preacher he was singularly practical and direct. There was a wonderful combination of severity and gentleness in his nature. He was more like John Fletcher, the saintly Swiss preacher, than he was like Wesley. He was in fact "An English and peasant version of that half-angelic Swiss."

Asbury suited the American character and the conditions of American life better even than Wesley or Coke. Like Wesley he was neat in dress, methodical in his industry, an incessant student and a tireless worker. He was never married, and often resented the claims that domestic ties put upon his preachers. This Staffordshire peasant, although he began his career without education, made himself a scholar, and mastered Latin, Greek and Hebrew. When we read that he travelled five thousand miles a year, preaching incessantly and spending three hours a day in prayer we wonder how he did it. He made an ideal superintendent. To his self-denying labors and wise planning the marvellous growth of Methodism is due. At his death, in 1816, Methodism had risen to a leading place among the churches of the United States. The whole territory lying between the Mississippi and the Atlantic seaboard had been occupied. Churches and Colleges had been built, Sunday-schools organized and Book Rooms established. Asbury is just coming to his own. He was too big to be appreciated by those who lived nearest to him. "But in the history of his Church, as God sees it and writes it, and will crown it, not many figures stand higher than that of the peasant bishop of Methodism in the United States—Francis Asbury."

REVIEW QUESTIONS.

- (1) What is the value of the study of history?
- (2) What branch of the Canadian Methodist Church, prior to 1883, had been a part of the American Church?
- (3) Describe the field in which Methodism began its work in America.
- (4) Name some of the earliest Methodist preachers in America.
- (5) Name the principal men sent to America by John Wesley.
- (6) Give a brief account of Asbury's earlier life.

(7) Give a brief account of his work in America from 1771 to 1784.

(8) Tell what you can about the first Methodist Conference in America.

(9) How did the Revolutionary War affect Methodism?

(10) What led John Wesley to ordain men for America?

(11) Give a sketch of Dr. Coke's character and career.

(12) Give an account of the General Conference of 1784.

(13) Describe Asbury's character and work.

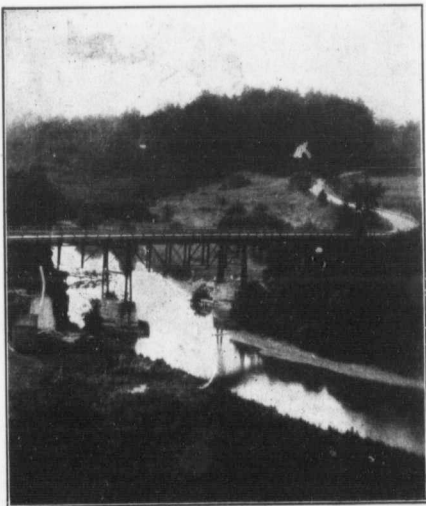
BOOKS OF REFERENCE.

History of the M. E. Church—Nathan Bangs. History of Methodism—Hurst. The Centenary of American Methodism—Stevens. Wesley and his Century—Fitchett.

Editor's note.—The foregoing article is the first of a series dealing with the same general theme—Representative Men of Canadian Methodism. These studies comprise the regular monthly topic for the Third Department of the Epworth League, but are of such common interest to Methodists as a whole that they may well be followed by other societies than the Epworth League, Clubs, Brotherhoods, Classes, Circles, and study them. We cannot promise as much space every month to even so engrossing a theme, but Mr. Malott will make the best possible use of each succeeding issue of this paper to give interesting and valuable information concerning the men who have given our Church its place in this land. Follow the series.

A Glimpse of Beauty

Humboldt was once deeply touched. He found a flower—and it was on the edge of the Vesuvius crater. Dust had settled in a hollow of the lava ashes. When the rains fell there a cupful of rich soil was ready. A bird or the wind



OVER THE ROUGE RIVER, NEAR TORONTO.
Amateur Photograph. By W. Ross Smith, Toronto.

had borne a seed and had dropped it in this soil on the crater's lip. And from it grew a sweet and beautiful flower. No wonder the great scientist was moved by a glimpse of beauty in such a place. In our pilgrimage we come now and then upon lives that seem utterly dreary. Their life-history is but desolation. Sorrow and sin have stripped them bare. Yet, if you will, even in these waste places in life you cause a flower to grow whose aroma and beauty will make you forget all the barrenness.