

Our Contributors.

THE HON. MR. LA GRIPPE'S ADDRESS TO HIS CONSTITUENTS.

BY KNOXIAN

La Grippe being about to leave Canada may be supposed to deliver the following farewell address :

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I need scarcely tell you that I have visited all parts of your country and have had the pleasure of becoming personally acquainted with many of you. I have seen you in your homes and have stayed there perhaps a little longer than I was welcome. When I made my first appearance a good many of you laughed at me, but before I left some of you concluded that my visit was no laughing matter. Some of you might learn a good lesson at this point. There are a few people in every community who think that everything should be laughed at. They giggle and simper all the year round. I hope they have learned a wholesome lesson from my visit. A good laugh at the right time, in the right place and at some suitable object is a good, healthful thing ; but there are things no sensible person ought to laugh at, and human suffering is one of them. If my visit has taught some people when they ought and ought not to laugh it has not been made in vain.

I suppose, ladies and gentlemen, I interfered seriously with some of your social arrangements. I have not kept exact figures but I know that I prevented a considerable number of you from attending balls and dancing parties. For being thus prevented some of you are very angry. But, dear friends, as the preachers say, was this an unmixed evil? Some of you are in great danger of becoming too fond of dancing. Whether private, select dancing is wrong or not is a question we need not now discuss ; but admitting for argument's sake that it is not, every rational man knows that it is the easiest thing in the world to become too fond of it. When young people become the slaves of any kind of amusement their usefulness is gone and their happiness, too. If the heels become master instead of the head the head always softens until it becomes no good. Now if my visit has led some of you people who are getting too fond of amusement to stop and think seriously you should not be too angry at me for coming over to Canada. Some of you are not in danger of doing too much serious thinking.

Some of you religious people are very angry at me for cutting down the attendance at your churches and Sabbath schools. You think that was an unmixed evil. I don't think anything of the kind. If a thin congregation for a Sabbath or two should teach ministers and elders and class leaders and all these excellent people who manage churches to depend more on the power of the Holy Spirit, and less on mere numbers, my visit will bring about a genuine revival of religion in Canada. Many of you Canadian people depend too much on crowds and too little on the power of truth and the power of the Spirit. You utterly ignore the fact that the Spirit is the only real agent in the conversion of men. So far as the efficacious power is concerned it makes no difference whether the audience numbers 10,000 or ten. By all means bring everybody to church if you can but don't bring them on the understanding that they have any power to convert each other. If you good people have been led to think that there is not necessarily any moral or spiritual power in mere numbers you should not be so angry at me for thinning out your churches and reducing your collections. My visit may do you as much good as a sermon.

I notice that some of my Presbyterian constituents have got into the habit of describing their body as

THIS GREAT CHURCH.

When they coined that phrase they did not think that a visitor from Russia could lay thousands of their best church workers low in a few days and nearly stop many departments of the work. Boastful phrases of that kind should be left to the people who use the associated press arrangement for reporting the number of people they think they convert. If my visit teaches some of my Presbyterian and other constituents that all their work could be very easily stopped, and in this way humbles them, a little good will be done.

Ladies and gentlemen, you complain somewhat bitterly about the grip I take upon individuals and families. Did it ever occur to you when you were savagely denouncing me that many other things take a worse grip upon some of you than I ever took and you never denounce them? Let me in closing mention some of the things that take a fearful grip of some people.

SELFISHNESS

has a very tight grip of some people. One of your noblest ministers described a Toronto dude the other day as a "human dog." Imitating his example I may say that a thoroughly selfish man might be described as a human hog. Yes, he might be if we were not afraid of doing injustice to the hog. A hog is very useful and toothsome after he is dead, if well cooked, but a thoroughly selfish human hog is no use living or dead.

PENURIOUSNESS

takes a frightful grip on some people—a harder grip than I ever took. My hold usually lasts but a few days ; penuriousness often keeps his grip for a life time. Why don't you make him let go?

WHISKEY

takes a terrible grip on many. It makes their eyes redder and their heads sorer than I ever did. You complain that I made your eyes watery. Whiskey has drawn gallons of tears from Canadian eyes for every one I ever drew. It has desolated a thousand homes and broken a thousand hearts for every heart and home I touched. Why don't you resist its grip?

Ladies and gentlemen, before you abuse me any more, just sit down and count over the number of worse things that you allow to take a grip on you.

THOMAS WITHEROW, D.D., LL.D.

By the death of Dr. Witherow the Presbyterian Church in Ireland has lost one of her most talented and beloved ministers, and the Presbyterian community throughout the world share in the bereavement. Thomas Witherow was born in the neighbourhood of Newonlimavady in the county of Londonderry. His father, Hugh Witherow, was a respectable farmer, and a man of sterling worth and unaffected piety. At an early age he dedicated his boy to the office of the Christian ministry. The young lad had the advantage of such schools as were then to be found in rural districts, and from what we know of that tract of country which lay under the shadow of the Dungiven Mountains the country schools were not above the average. From the country school he went to a classical seminary, after which, in 1839, he entered the Belfast Academi- cal institution where he was prepared for entering college. In 1842 he entered on the study of divinity and as the two synods had recently become one the two professors, Drs. Edgar and Hanna, were appointed joint Professors of Theology, and the Rev. Dr. Killen, who is still alive, and who only resigned his chair in the college last year, was the Professor of Church History.

From Belfast the ambitious youth, like many others of the Irish boys, made his way to Scotland and under the famous Chalmers took a course in Edinburgh. We have often heard Mr. Witherow speak of his acquaintance with Dr. Chalmers and express his admiration of the great Scottish theologian. When settled as a clergyman among other rules which he laid down for guidance in his pastorate was one that he would not preach funeral sermons, but he was soon put to a severe test when the news of the death of Dr. Chalmers reached him. The rule had to give way, for the young pastor could not resist the strong impulse to point out the lesson of the great Scottish theologian's life and death and pay a tribute to his memory. He delivered a discourse on the occasion which was remembered for years.

Having completed his college course Mr. Witherow was licensed in 1845 and for some months did the usual probationary work of preaching in vacancies, and in one or two cases, was unsuccessful, for although he was regarded as an able young man he did not at this period exhibit any remarkable degree of ability.

During the year 1845 he received a call from the congregation of Maghera to be the assistant and successor of Rev. Mr. Kennedy, and as the senior minister—as was the custom in those days—retained the Regium Donum during his life, the young minister's salary for a number of years did not exceed much over \$250 a year. In this quiet but important charge the young pastor laboured for twenty years, during which time he was preparing himself for the higher positions which the Head of the Church intended Him to occupy. All his life he had a strong liking for books and study and his scholastic achievements often aroused the amazement of his co-Presbyters and friends.

It was during these twenty years of busy pastoral work that the future president and professor began to attract notice, not only as a vigorous and eloquent preacher, but as a writer for a number of important magazines.

The neighbourhood of Maghera was classic ground. From it sprung some of the ablest men that ever appeared in any church, among whom may be mentioned Dr. Henry Cooke, Presbyterian ; Dr. Alexander Carsen, Baptist, and Dr. Adam Clarke, the Methodist Commentator. A Young Men's Christian Association, which this writer helped to organize, applied to Mr. Witherow for a lecture, to which request he kindly responded and in the ensuing winter he gave a lecture entitled, "Our Local Celebrities," referring to the three great men named above. The lecture was a magnificent effort, and by the request of the association was published under the title of "Three Prophets of Our Own." The entire edition was rapidly disposed of and for a number of years has been out of print ; a copy of it is still in my possession. This was Dr. Witherow's introduction to the field of authorship. His next venture was one of still more importance. A remarkably able series of discourses, delivered in the ordinary course of pulpit ministration, were published under the title of "The Apostolic Church." The work was received with great interest, having passed through several editions in a very short time. As might be expected it speedily found its way to the libraries of most Presbyterian clergymen.

In the year 1859 one effect of the great revival in Ulster, in which Mr. Witherow took a lively interest, was the question of baptism. It became a prominent subject of discussion and in order to instruct his people on the question he delivered some discourses which were afterwards published, the volume being known as "The Mode and Subjects of Baptism." Several other important publications were the fruits of his study. For a number of years he has been regarded as among the most thoughtful and prolific authors in the Presbyterian Church.

About the year 1860 the Chair of Biblical Criticism in Belfast College became vacant and Mr. Witherow was induced to become a candidate. His most formidable opponent was the late J. L. Porter, D.D. The contest was close, Mr. Witherow being defeated by only seventeen votes. Dr. Porter was a most admirable selection. He was afterwards appointed to the presidency of Queen's University, a position he held until his lamented death about a year ago. In 1865, after a series of stormy debates in the General Assembly, Magee College in Derry was opened and Mr. Witherow was elected by acclamation to the Chair of Church History and Pastoral Theology in that institution, and no doubt Mr. Witherow's best friends felt that this was his proper department. The Chair he filled with becoming ability and dignity till he died.

To many of the leading English periodicals and reviews he was a constant and well known contributor, and upon all the great questions of the day affecting either Church or State his opinions had great weight. Being of a modest, retiring disposition Professor Witherow never sought notoriety, and seldom addressed the Supreme Court of the Church. He was of a nervous temperament and felt that the arena of debate was not his place. In 1878 he was called by his brethren to the Moderator's chair, and seldom were duties more suitably discharged. From the joint colleges of Belfast and Derry he was among the first to receive the honorary degree of D.D.

As a preacher of the Gospel for many years Dr. Witherow held a high place ; his sermons were symmetrical, thoughtful, and at times, eloquent in the truest sense of the word. Although carefully prepared and written out he never preached from manuscript. As an expounder of Scripture and the doctrines of grace as taught in the Standards of the Church, Dr. Witherow had few equals in any Church ; the most abstruse and technical questions of Calvinism he could make so simple and clear that everyone could understand them. His devotional services were highly interesting and instructive and it was evident to all who heard him that he had a remarkable gift of prayer. On sacramental occasions the services would be crowded and persons not of the congregation would come six and seven miles to be present at these services. Personally he was a man of fervent yet unaffected piety.

In politics he was a staunch Liberal, and always took the side of the tenant farmers, and by voice and pen did much to carry the Tenant Right Bill which secures to tenants the value of the improvements on their farms. In private life Dr. Witherow was one of the most lovable of men ; in social gatherings he was the centre of attraction and the young of his congregation were never better pleased than when invited to his hospitable and cheerful home.

Dr. Witherow for some time was set aside from active duty, but it was expected that he would in time be fully restored to health. His absence at the opening of the college was a cause of much regret ; still hopes were entertained of his recovery ; such, however, was not to be ; his work was done and he has now entered on the reward. His wife predeceased him some years ago, and he leaves a family of six daughters and one son. He was about sixty-six years of age. Good-bye, beloved friend ! As we think of that noble but lifeless form committed to its kindred dust, we drop the tear of sorrow, yet reflecting with thankfulness on the many wanderers who by his labours were brought into the fold, on the many Christians whose lives were made more joyful, whose sorrows were easier borne, who withstood temptation more successfully, and whose prospects of a blessed immortality were brightened and cheered.

"Remember them which have the rule over you who have spoken unto you the Word of God ; whose faith follow considering the end of their conversation."

Toronto, Jan. 28, 1890.

K.

A CALL FROM BRITISH COLUMBIA.

MR. EDITOR,—Permit me through your columns to appeal to the Church in the east to send us a missionary for the vacant field of Vernon and Okanagan within the bounds of this Presbytery. The Assembly's Home Mission Committee have earnestly sought to obtain a man for this mission, but hitherto apparently in vain. Why is this? Is the missionary spirit dying out? Has the Macedonian cry ceased to appeal to the hearts of God's servants? Does any exceptionally good opportunity for doing effective work in Christ's service no longer constitute a sufficient reason for venturing into the "regions beyond?"

I consider Vernon and Okanagan a very inviting field of usefulness. Look at some facts ; for a sparsely-settled, ranching district people of all the Protestant denominations have united to support a missionary, knowing that it is only by this course that they can hope to have stated services.

The community is one of growing importance. The "knowing ones" say that startling developments may be expected very soon in the way of mining and railway building. A dry, beautiful climate. Good roads all the year round. Work, on the whole, not so laborious as in most of our rural fields in British Columbia.

Who will say, "Here am I, send me?" Dr. Cochrane will be delighted to receive applications. There is no time to be lost.

DONALD FRASER,

H. M. Convener, Presbytery of Columbia.

Victoria, B. C., Jan. 16, 1890.