

Our Contributors.

CONCERNING MAGNETISM IN MEN.

BY KNOXONIAN.

Were we asked to name a minister of the present day who might be taken as the very antipodes of a "grim Genevan," we should without a moment's hesitation say, the late Prof. Elmslie, of London. His memoir, written all too briefly but with admirable taste and skill by the Messrs. Macnicoll, sets before us a character that every man, healthy in mind and body, will instinctively admire and love. Elmslie was a rare man not exclusively or even mainly because he was an accurate scholar, an eloquent preacher, a brilliant writer and an accomplished man of affairs. There was a "certain something" about him which attracted his fellow-men and did so without any conscious effort on his part. That "certain something" is not easily defined. People call it personal magnetism, and that name will perhaps do as well as any other, but when you have given the power a name how much more do you know about it?

Perhaps the most magnetic man Ontario ever produced was the late Chief Justice Moss. He was the most popular student of his time in the Toronto University. Perhaps the highest compliment ever paid a man was paid to him when it was said he went to the highest place in the legal profession without exciting the envy of one man he passed on the way. The Tory city of Toronto sent him to Parliament by a majority of five hundred; Parliament gave him a first place though a new member, and the Government of the day made him Chief Justice at perhaps an earlier age than any Canadian had ever sat on the Bench. Who ever grudged "Tom Moss," as his friends used to call him, his high and rapidly-obtained honours! Every one rejoiced at his promotion. And why? Because apart from his ability to adorn every high place he occupied there was a "certain something" about him that attracted his fellow-men just as there is a certain something about some other public men we could easily name that repels everybody who comes near them.

One of the best ways in this world to find out all that is in a man and all that is of him is to camp out with him for a week or ten days. Next to this the best way is to travel with him. The angel or the hog always comes out when you get a person away alone. Dr. Marcus Dods, Prof. Drummond and Elmslie tramped for five weeks through the Black Forest and the Tyrol for a holiday and it is intensely interesting to note how these distinguished tourists felt the influence of Elmslie. Dr. Dods writes:—

Often compelled to sleep in one room, and always thrown upon one another from sunrise to sundown, we came to have a tolerably complete insight into one another's character. And for my part I never ceased to marvel at the unfeeling good humour and gaiety with which Elmslie put up with the little inconveniences incident to such travel, at the brightness he diffused in four languages, at the sparkling wit with which he seasoned the most common-place talk and at the ease and felicity with which he turned his mind to the gravest problems of life and of theology and penetrated to the very heart of them. His cleverness, his smartness of repartee, his nimbleness of mind, his universal sympathy and complete intelligence were each hour a fresh surprise and were as exhilarating as the mountain air and the new scenes through which we were passing. I have often reproached myself with not treasuring the fine sayings with which he lifted us into a region in which former difficulties were scarcely discernible and not at all disturbing. But, indeed, one might as well have tried to bottle the atmosphere for home consumption, for into everything he said he carried a buoyancy and a light all his own.

One who could thus impress a man like Dr. Dods—and by the way, Elmslie was only about thirty years of age at the time—must have had no ordinary magnetic powers.

Professor Drummond, himself one of the most attractive of living writers, seems to have been even more impressed than Dr. Dods. He says:—

I never heard Elmslie preach, or lecture, or do anything public. I knew him chiefly as a human being. Elmslie off the chair was one of the most attractive spirits that ever graced this planet. It was not so much his simple character, or his bubbling and irresistible *bon-homme*, or even the amazing fertility of his gifts, but a certain radiance that he carried with him, a certain something that made you sun yourself in his presence, and open the pores of your soul and be happy. I think I can recall no word that he ever spoke, or even any idea that he ever forged, but the man made an impression on you indelibly, delightfully and joyous.

Now there is a marvellous illustration of personal power. Professor Drummond never heard Elmslie preach, or lecture, or do anything public; he could not recall a word that he heard him speak or an idea that he ever forged, and yet he felt in a distinct and lasting manner the power of the man. Not Elmslie the scholar, or Elmslie the theologian, or Elmslie the orator, but Elmslie the "human being" made the impression upon Prof. Drummond.

Space forbids quoting from the Rev. John Smith, Broughton Place, Edinburgh, or from Dr. Stalker, of Glasgow, to show the impression made upon them by Elmslie's personality during college days and by further intercourse years afterwards. One illustration of his attractiveness must, however, be given. Dr. Blaikie founded a college dinner and you could always tell where Elmslie sat at the table by the crowd and the explosions of laughter that came from that quarter. "Men strove to sit near him and he diffused a glow up and down."

Why do people like to sit near some men and want to sit as far away as possible from others?

Why are some human beings attractive and others repellent if not repulsive?

Why do you feel like shaking hands with some men and like going round a block to avoid others?

Why does one woman you meet impress you most happily and the next one make you inwardly thank the Lord that this world is a large place?

Assume that in the foregoing cases the attractive and repellent are about equal morally and intellectually, why do some attract and others repel? What is the certain something that makes the difference?

THE BI-CENTENARY OF "THE GLORIOUS RETURN" OF THE WALDENSES IN 1689.

II.

There were in honour of the occasion six festivals, as we may call them. Though all were of a joyous nature the first five were also of a solemn one. They were the following:—

I.—THE FESTIVAL AT PRANGINS,

which took place on the 16th of August, 1889. Prangins is in Switzerland. Here, that day two hundred years before, Henri Arnaud and his followers set out on their journey, the success of which was now to be celebrated with joy, and with praise and thanks to the Lord.

The early part of the morning was wet. There was every appearance of the whole day being the same. However, it was not. The clouds which covered the slopes of the Jura* above Prangins, were, by and by, scattered, and, with the exception of a heavy shower about 11.30, the rain did not mar the festival.

A party of Waldenses left Geneva by steamer about eight in the morning. At the landing place and at the railway station of Nyon, they met many invited friends. Then a great procession, with the flag of the Waldensian Valleys at its head, started for Promentoux, below Prangins.

The Waldenses carried an elegant banner fringed with gold. On the Italian colours was their coat of arms, the candlestick on a Bible, surrounded by stars, and the motto: "Lux lucet in tenebris" (The light shineth in darkness).

The memorial monument stands on the spot where, according to tradition, Henri Arnaud with his followers began their daring journey, after they had besought help from above. Before you are the mountains of Savoy which he crossed with his troops. To the right, somewhat in the rear, is the chateau of Nyon, flanked by its round turrets. The monument is a small obelisk of limestone from the Jura, on which is the following inscription in letters of gold, commemorating the departure of the Waldenses two hundred years ago: "After three years of sojourning on this hospitable soil, the Waldenses, of Piedmont, set out from this place to return to their country, August 16, 1689. The children of these heroes have reared this monument August 16, 1889."

On the base is the motto: "Lux lucet in tenebris."

M. Bourne, of Geneva, President of the Monumental Committee, in a few words gave an account of the event, the remembrance of which was the occasion of the festival, and heartily welcomed the friends who had come to express their sympathy with his fellow-countrymen on that day of rejoicing.

M. Bosio, vice-Moderator of the Waldensian Table, came next. He read the 126th Psalm, which gives utterance to the joyous transports of the exiles on their return from Babylon to Jerusalem. Every one was struck with the remarkable suitability of these words of the psalmist: "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing; then said they among the heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad."

The speaker commented on these verses in a most impressive manner. He blessed God that He had not let the Waldensian Church perish, that He had raised up for it kind friends in its exile, and that He had made it free and permitted it to take up again its historic mission—the evangelization of Italy. He blessed God for these festivals, of which they had that day the first, and in which evangelical Christians over all the earth, united. He spoke, with gratitude to God and to the king, of a letter sent from an old palace of the popes at Rome, by His Majesty, Humbert I. to the Waldensian Church, on the occasion of the bi-centenary. He quoted a passage from an old Huguenot psalm, corresponding with the following one in our version:—

For my distressed soul from death
Delivered was by Thee;
Thou did'st my mourning eyes from tears,
My feet from falling free.

I in the land of those that live
Will walk the Lord before.

Then M. Bosio called to remembrance what Switzerland did in 1689 for the Waldenses driven out of their valleys. He pictured the Genevese going to seek them at the Arve Bridge, contending about them, eager to comfort these unhappy victims of persecution. "It is just, it is good," he said, "that our festivals should begin here, on this hospitable soil, on which I implore the blessing from on high, and that its children should rejoice with us." Then he recited a touching verse from the hymn of the valleys which celebrates the love of the Waldenses of those days to their Swiss benefactors. Next, turning to the communal authority, he committed to him the care of the monument, adding: "Keep it as a medal of honour, and as an expression of homage to these two great impelling principles which have made our fathers and yours act; the love of God and the love of country."

* "And Jura answers through her misty shroud."—Byron.

M. Denogent, representing the municipality of Prangins, thanked him. Then M. Henri Meille took the platform. "This monument," he said, pointing to the obelisk on which, at that moment, a sunbeam shone, "is a stone of remembrance, and a stone of alliance." In glowing terms the speaker extolled the kindness of the evangelical cantons. He next described what they were, to whom it was shown. He represented them during their exile weeping for their country.* Its green plains, its sunny mountain-sides where grew the vine and the fig-tree, and where one saw through the leaves naught but the blue of the sky, and the white of the foaming stream. He made his hearers see them yearning for national and religious independence. This was sure to find an echo in the hearts of the Swiss who, to-day, as Juste Olivier says, are happy and proud.

On their knees before God, erect before kings.

M. Meille showed his forefathers eager to take up again their historic mission, which they expressed in the oath at Sibaoud, in these words: "We, all together, promise to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, to pluck, as far as in us lies, the rest of our brethren out of cruel Babylon in order to establish and maintain with them His kingdom till death."† Then, in a highly poetic strain, he told the story of the Glorious Return, with the courage and the patience displayed by the Waldenses of 1689 in enduring hunger and cold, and in facing danger. He held them up to view, in the midst of mountains covered with snow, with the enemy in all the passes, without provisions, steadfastly looking to God for deliverance. To the hearers this stirring tale seemed for the moment a reality. "The Waldenses came back to Italy," continued M. Meille, "what did they bring with them? Thanks to their labour the country, by degrees, regained its prosperity, every trace of desolation disappeared and the smoke again went up from the family hearth in rebuilt villages. The Waldenses did more than restore to Italy a prosperous country, they gave it liberty of conscience. They made the State grant the principle of moral liberty—the source of national life and progress. More than that, they brought to their country liberty of conscience, and freedom from all fear of the judgment, and from the slavery of sin. For the spirit of the fathers still lives in the children, and the Waldensian Church to-day carries the Gospel into the whole of the Peninsula, from Aosta—where, in front of the monument in remembrance of the expulsion of Calvin, stands a Waldensian chapel—to Rome itself, where the Waldensian Church has a magnificent temple. You will find it there, in the Via Nazionale, the main artery of new Rome, through which the life of the modern city flows in great streams. This monument is a stone of remembrance. It is also one of alliance between us and you," added the speaker. "We pledge ourselves before you to continue the work of our fathers in Italy. Your fathers saved us in the days of old. Help us to save our country. It cannot be pacified, comforted, and set up again without the Gospel. Help us then to enlighten it, to save it, and to set before it Christ crucified!"

Between the different addresses, there were sung in turn the "Retour de l'Exil," the "Rimpatrio," and, at the close, the "Rufst du mein Vaterland."

M. Peyrot, the pastor of Angrogna, led in prayer.

At that moment a heavy rain, which was soon over, made those present take shelter in the neighbouring houses. The bell at length told that mid-day had come. All then began to go up again to Prangins.

T. F.

Elder's Mills, Ont.

THE PROBLEM OF THE AGE.

BY REV. W. A. M'KAY, B.A., WOODSTOCK, ONT.

The problem of the age is, beyond all question, How shall we improve the condition of the toiling masses? Few will deny the social and industrial hardships which bear heavily upon the working classes in the great centres of the world's population; nor can the most superficial observer fail to note the ever-increasing restlessness with which these hardships are endured. In some places this restlessness is more, and in other places less, discernible, but it everywhere exists. Sometimes it shows itself only as the heaving of the swell on a calm sea, while at times it breaks forth as the bursting into the wild storm and fury of the raging ocean. "Bread or Blood" is the ominous device on many a banner only partially concealed.

Throughout Christendom, writes a high authority, a cloud is gathering whose shadow falls upon the streets of every great city from St. Petersburg to San Francisco. Our civilization, whose present special type dates back now some four hundred years, in spite of all it has achieved and all it promises, has an underside to it of terrible menace; as in ancient Athens, the cave of the furies was underneath the rock, on whose top sat the court of the Areopagus.

How shall unjust restrictions be removed and the evils which threaten the very existence of our civilization averted? Nihilism, communism and infidel socialism are ever ready with their answer; but alas! they only give us stones for bread. The remedy they propose is worse, infinitely worse, than the evils they would remove. Their answer means wages without work; it means arson, assassination, anarchy. They would abolish the State, the Church, the family, and hurl all things into chaos in order that out of the confusion they might reconstruct the world on their own improved principles. The leaders in these atheistic movements are for the

* We wept when we remembered Zion.—Psalm cxxxvii. 1.

† It was taken with the uplifted hand. The taking of the oath at Sibaoud was a scene very like that in Greyfriars' Churchyard, Edinburgh, when the solemn League and Covenant was entered into.