

## Our Contributors.

### CONCERNING SOME GOOD MEN WHO LEFT US.

BY KNOXIAN.

The death of Dr. Donald Fraser suggests the names of a considerable number of exceptionally able ministers whose removal to other churches and other lands was a distinct loss to the Presbyterianism of Canada. It is easy to say that we have got on fairly well without them. We might have got on much better *with* them. A few men who stand head and shoulders over their fellows—who can be used with effect on special occasions—who can go on any platform and, holding their own and a little more, send the people away saying, "These Presbyterians are the people after all—a few such men are worth a great deal to the denomination. We have some men of that kind now, but not so many that any congregation can be reasonably sure of getting their services when special work is to be done. A few representative men of power do much more to preserve the unity of the Church than at first blush may appear. Congregations and ministers constantly noeing at their own row and rarely in touch with other ministers and other churches are almost certain to become isolated in feeling and lose sympathy with denominational effort. Whatever theory we may hold with regard to bishops, a minister whose commanding eloquence makes him a bishop among his brethren, is a good kind of man to have. In fact he is the best kind of bishop.

Dr. Donald Fraser, or plain Donald Fraser, as he used to be called—he didn't need any prefixes or affixes to his name—was just the kind of man that any Church with a grain of sense would always keep in the foreground. Popular enough to move the masses and quite high-toned enough to touch the classes, he could do his Church justice anywhere. Nobody would ever dream of offering Dr. Donald Fraser a back seat in any company. Thoroughly evangelical in spirit, devotedly attached to the essentials of his creed, but no stickler about denominational trifles, a man of unique eloquence and splendidly-balanced power in the pulpit or on the platform, Dr. Fraser was just the preacher to make himself felt anywhere. Canadian Presbyterianism lost one of its strongest men when he crossed the Atlantic. Why did we lose him? We don't know, but we have often heard that it was because he did not visit enough to please some of the Montreal people. Surely this "great Church"—great Church is a General Assembly phrase seldom used by men who have to raise money—could afford to keep one first-class pulpit orator who did not make a speciality of pastoral visitation.

Ten or twelve years after Dr. Fraser left, our Presbyterianism sustained another severe loss by the removal of

DR. ORMISTON

to New York. Dr. Ormiston was a power in his day. He was one of the representative men of the old U. P. Church, and knew Ontario from the Ottawa River to Lake Huron as few Presbyterian ministers ever knew it. His connection with the educational work of the Province gave him great influence with the teaching fraternity, while his electric eloquence in the pulpit and on the platform gave him great influence with almost everybody. We once heard Principal Willis say that Dr. Ormiston's sermon on "Reconciliation" was about the best he ever heard in Canada and one of the best he ever heard anywhere. Than Dr. Willis no better judge of sermons ever stood on Canadian soil. While his average was no doubt good, Dr. Ormiston's special effort was a long way better than good. For a church opening, anniversary service or special work of any kind he was simply unique. His drawing power was superb. If ever Dr. Ormiston preached to a thin house on a special occasion there were not many Presbyterians within a radius of ten miles.

The Church lost another good man when

DR. DAVID INGLIS

left Canada and took up his abode in Brooklyn. Dr. Inglis had personal qualities that greatly endeared him to a large circle of personal friends. He was as trusty and true a friend as ever grasped a human hand. Like his neighbour, Dr. Ormiston, he was a valuable man for special occasions, and his assistance was much sought by his brethren in all parts of the country. So kind was his heart that he rarely refused to help a neighbour no matter how much labour and inconvenience the effort cost him. Can any higher compliment be paid Dr. Inglis or any other minister of Christ than to say that he was always at his best amidst the solemnities of a communion season? The Presbyterianism of Canada lost a true and noble man and a preacher of rare unction and power when David Inglis crossed the line and began his life work anew in Brooklyn.

Hamilton reminds us of another loss.

DR. IRVINE

was a preacher of rare power. His fine presence, his splendid voice, his genuine Irish eloquence made him a front rank man in the pulpit. In the palmy days of his pulpit power Dr. Robert Irvine did not need to take a back seat in any pulpit company. Few men knew better how to make an effective sermon, and none knew better how to deliver one when made. Principal Willis always considered his "Irish friend," as he sometimes called him—in private of course—one of the most effective pulpit orators in Canada. Like all other good preachers, Dr. Irvine was not always at his best,

but his best was capital. No good preacher is always at his best. The only preacher who ever attains absolute uniformity is the man who always preaches so badly that he cannot by any possibility become any worse. There are preachers of that kind.

In the autumn of 1859 or 1860 a slender lad with large spectacles and a foreign air entered Knox College. He came from Bermuda and was under the care of Dr. Burns. When about half way through his course he left Knox and went to Princeton. That lad is now

DR. F. L. PATTON,

President of Princeton College, and the acknowledged leader of the conservative wing of the American Presbyterian Assembly. What President Patton might have been had he remained in Canada no one can tell, but since we lost him he has developed into the most influential Presbyterian on this continent.

One of the worst losses ever sustained by the Church was made when

DR. JOHN MUNRO GIBSON

went away. We have been told by those who ought to know that in point of usefulness Dr. Gibson's Church, with its varied machinery, is one of the first Presbyterian Churches in London. The Doctor himself is a man of fine scholarship and great influence. As an author he ranks high. His volume on "Matthew" is quite equal to any in the Expositor's series. What were we thinking about when we allowed Dr. Gibson to leave Canada? Is our Church so rich in high scholarship that we can afford to lose men like Patton and Gibson?

A capital all-round man was lost when

DR. DAVID WATERS

went from St. John to Newark. Dr. Waters had no dear brother gush in his composition, but he was a true man. He was not effusive, but he was as good a neighbour as any Canadian minister every worked beside. There was no hour of the twenty-four that he would not leave home to help a good cause and no kind of work that he could not do well. As a Church court and committee man—more especially as a secretary of committees—he never had a superior in the Church. His business training in the Crown Land office of the olden time made him a most valuable man in a Church not noted for a surplus of business talent among its preachers. When Dr. Waters left we lost one of the most loyal and effective all-round workers the Church ever had.

The Church sustained a bad loss when

DR. M'TAVISH

recrossed the Atlantic and resumed work in the land of his birth. Dr. McTavish was a devoted, self-sacrificing man. He loved his Church and showed his love by hard work in her highest interests—sometimes by telling her plain truth that timid or more politic men would have half smothered or concealed. He was a power in the Gaelic congregations, and in the early days did noble service among his countrymen.

Nothing has been said about good men who left the Churches of the Maritime Provinces before the Union of '75, or of many who have left the united Church since that time. Everything cannot be put in one article. We have merely sketched a few that we happened to know personally or know something about. Taken altogether the number we have lost would make a good Synod, and many of them were conspicuously able men. Why did we lose so many men that would have been worth a great deal to the Church? Some of them have a world-wide reputation to-day. The people who sustained the loss might settle with that question.

There is one comfort—"men may come and men may go," but the work goes on forever.

### THE AGED AND INFIRM MINISTERS.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE WELL-TO-DO MEMBERS OF OUR CHURCH—II

BY ONE OF THEMSELVES

The history of the planting of the Church in Canada would tell of the self-denying labours and struggles and sacrifices of the pioneers that are all but forgotten, even by the few, and little dreamt of by the many. Such a history should be written soon when materials are accessible, and before all the fathers shall have passed away. What I propose to do in this letter is to give a few sketches of my own experience—a sample of what some other one could give in fuller detail.

I received my education in Scotland, and was sent out to Canada as a foreign missionary. Crossing the Atlantic nearly fifty years ago was a very different thing from what it is now; it took six weeks to finish the voyage, now it can be done in one week. We encountered one terrible storm; all hope was given up both by sailors and passengers; we were scudding before the wind, with our helm lashed, for no one could stand at it, and a small sail set to steady our ship. I had often read of mountain billows, I saw them now; they would come up as if they would swallow us all up, but our ship that seemed ready to plunge into the heart of the frightful wave would rise from the trough of the sea—climb higher and higher until it trembled on its crest, and then rush down on the other side only to encounter another wave more terrific than the former. Alas, one towering wave swept over the deck, carried away our bulwarks and swept two of our sailors over board; the one fortunately caught hold of a rope and was saved, the other—the first mate—was carried away out to

sea. I was standing on the gangway at the time; I saw him rise; he tried to swim to the ship; we could not help him in his struggle, and I saw him sink beneath the battling waves to rise no more; was this to be the fate of all of us ere long? He who holdeth the sea in the hollow of His hand heard our cry and sent deliverance; the next day the storm abated, and we returned thanks to God for our preservation. It was put upon me to write to the bride to whom the mate was married a day or two before sailing; we saw them taking their last fond embrace—and to tell her that she was so soon a widow.

My first appointment was to A and B, ten miles apart. The Presbyterian families in the neighbourhood had been gathered together by a neighbouring minister, but they had been so long without supply that they had disbanded. I had to gather them together; I visited every family known to be Presbyterian. And as I was anxious to know how the settlers lived, I took dinner and tea with them and sometimes my night's quarters; everywhere I was kindly entertained and delighted at the comforts these settlers enjoyed. The second week I visited in the same way at B. The weather was extremely hot. I threw off my coat, and the good elder who accompanied me carried it over his arm; the next day I left my coat at his house, and we both set out in our shirt sleeves and visited several families, sitting down at their hospitable table and engaging in worship. How would this do now-days? I am afraid the minister who would visit after this fashion would be tabooed. On the two Sabbaths I preached in two school-houses, crowded to the door with worshippers who were delighted to hear the old, old story told them by one whose language told them that their fatherland was his also. Soon these two small congregations united and had a pastor placed over them; and by and bye, they separated and each had its own pastor, and have long since been self-supporting and flourishing congregations with brick churches and comfortable manses.

I was sent on to C. This station had been formed and fostered by a neighbouring minister, who had recently left them that he might open another station in a needy locality; here I met with the greatest kindness. I do not know that I have ever met with so many aged men, devoted Christians, noble standard bearers. Such are the men who have laid the foundation of our Churches all over the land; their children and grandchildren are now reaping the fruits of their labours. This station soon obtained a pastor, and to-day it has a good brick church and manse. I was settled in D in the fall of the year; a small congregation had been gathered together by the minister of a neighbouring congregation. It had no church building, no way of paying a full salary, but God provided. Soon we had a church and a manse and a self-sustaining congregation, and at the present time the congregation is in a prosperous condition.

In E there was a small meeting where a kind friend gave them a sermon once a quarter or so. As it was within five miles of my home, I took hold of it and gave it afterwards supply for months, until they were able to call a minister of their own, and though they have not grown as some others, yet united to another station they support their own minister. About twenty miles from my home was a small village F where a friend of mine had gone to reside; he urged me to visit him and give the people a sermon. I left my own pulpit vacant on a Sabbath evening and drove there in time to hold an evening meeting, the first Presbyterian preaching they ever had. I did this for a number of Sabbaths, meeting with the friends on the Monday, and after some months I organized them into a congregation. Ten or twelve miles distant was another village G. When it was known there by the few families that belonged to us in the Old Country that a Presbyterian minister preached occasionally in F, they sent one of their leading men to see me and invite me to their village. I made an appointment with him, and left my own church vacant, preached at F in the forenoon and at G in the evening; this I repeated several times until these two stations united to call a minister of their own. After a while they were able with the assistance of a small station each to support two ministers, and both at the present time are in a flourishing condition.

After a few years, I was urged to enter on the mission field, and go into the heart of the Queen's bush. I do not know that the voice of any preacher had been heard before in H; it was a hard field to work. I preached three times each Sabbath, rode ten miles on horseback part of the way, following the blaize, and was over by five o'clock. No man could stand this work; and I was forced to give it up, not however before I had secured another station J, to divide the services of a minister between them; these two stations are now two independent congregations with all the indications of prosperity. I retained station K, and having attached to it another, L, remained there till the union. In reviewing my ministry of over forty years, I can associate with it the following pleasing reminiscences.

I have had to do with the reviving or planting and fostering of ten churches that form a part of our Presbyterian Church of Canada. They have mostly good brick churches and manses. Last year they raised for their ministers' stipend \$7,308, and for all purposes the handsome sum of \$14,295.

I doubt not there are pioneers who could give a much better account of themselves, and who may be encouraged to do so by my feeble attempt. See what the Lord has done for our country, in planting all over it congregations that hold fast and hold forth the Word of Truth—the secret of our national prosperity, and are the men who have done this noble work to be left neglected in their old age? They have toiled for many a long year, doing the extra work of the Church without receiving any remuneration, but the thanks of the early settlers and the consciousness of doing the Master's will, trusting that God would provide for them in their advanced years—will He do it through your liberality? In another letter I will speak of the trials and sacrifices of the men who were raised up as pioneers of the Church.