

Northern Messenger

VOLUME XXXVI., No. 16.

MONTREAL, APRIL 19, 1901.

50 Cts. Per An. Post-Paid.

Ellen Agnes Bilbrough-Wallace.

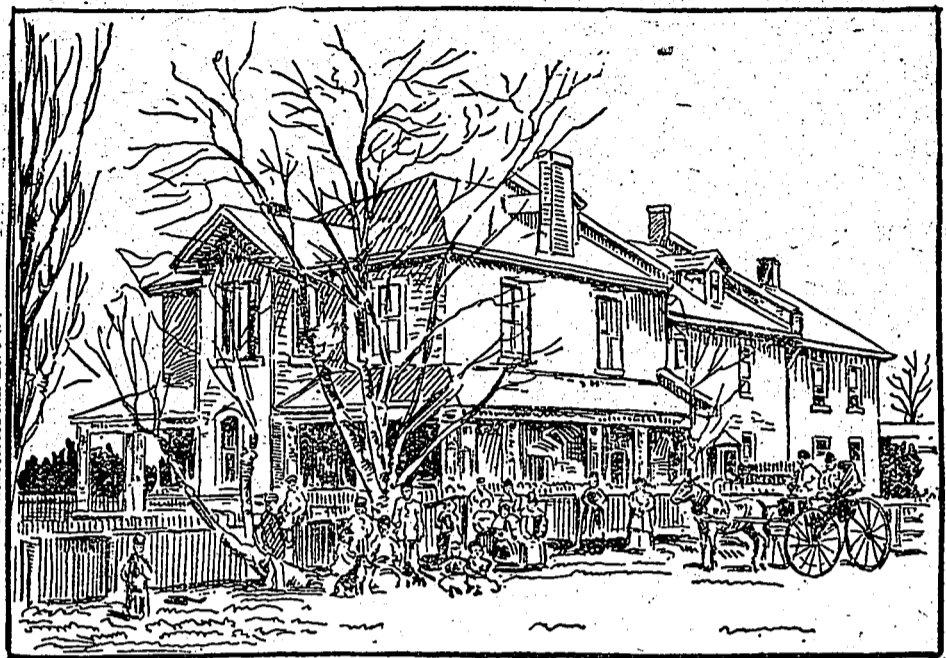
A FRIEND OF THE FRIENDLESS.

(By the Rev. C. W. Watch, in 'Onward.')

A beautiful life in its going out and coming in is richer by far in blessing to any community or land than the empty record of fame or the worship of gold. To have read the story of such a life and thus have caught its inspiration is no small thing; but to have known it, and had personal knowledge of its Christlike deeds, and have come under the influence of its character is far better. This has been the privilege of a very large number of young people, who will remember well of whom we write—Ellen A. Bilbrough-Wallace, of the Marchmont Home, Belleville.

It is no stretch of the imagination, it is a fact, to say that there is scarcely a town or hamlet of Ontario in which some one will not call her their friend, and in a great many churches of the land there are those who know her, and to whom her memory will be precious.

Mrs. Wallace was born in Leeds, England, in 1841, of godly parents, Brooks Priestly and Anne Bilbrough. The Rev. J. Lister, for many years pastor of the Myrtle Street Baptist Church, Liverpool, was her grandfather. Of her mother, as of herself, it could be said, 'She was a succorer of



THE MARCHMONT HOME, BELLEVILLE.

and Belleville was chosen as the site. After the destruction, by fire, of two houses, the present Marchmont Home was erected. The late Hon. Billa Flint, of Belleville, and Mr. George Hague, general manager of the Merchants Bank of Canada, were interested, and assisted in the building. Since then nearly seven thousand children have passed under her care. Of this large number not more than two percent have failed to justify the effort in their behalf. Those who know the work best question if any other Christian effort has produced results more encouraging than the labors of this Christly woman.

She said little about her own work or its results, or of the personal funds she was generously devoting to it, but in every profession and business can be found successful men and women, who, looking back, will remember Miss Bilbrough as the friend who gave them their first start in life.

In 1887 she was united in marriage to the Rev. Robert Wallace, who was associated with her in the work, and who survives to mourn his great loss.

She made Marchmont Home known not only as a distributing centre for the children, but it became to both the workers and the children a Bible Training and Missionary School. Very few Sabbath-schools but have had a Marchmont boy or girl come into their midst, and it has readily been admitted that they have come with a better knowledge of the Bible than many children have from even our best homes. Missionary information has been imparted and a missionary spirit developed until not a few of the workers and children have graduated from the Home to the most difficult spots in heathen lands, some of whom have entered into rest from the mission field. In 1896, in company with Mr. Wallace, this devoted woman journeyed round the world, her chief interest in the tour being to visit the mission stations in China, India, and the South Seas, while in the interest of her own work she crossed the Atlantic no less than twenty-five times.

It would be difficult for any one to have held personal friendship with a larger number of the prominent Christian leaders of

this and other lands than did Mrs. Wallace. Marchmont has become known in many lands for its generous hospitality. Very few leaders in the different churches—ministers, missionaries, and philanthropists—who have visited Canada, but have rested for a while at Marchmont Home.

There was not a moral reform but had her prayer and support. There were but few of the Christian beneficences, in the city or in the churches, but had her generous help. For thirty years she lived this life in our midst, walking in the fellowship of the Master; she knew his word, she sought his will.

It was little thought her work was done, though she expressed this feeling to a friend only two weeks before her death. She had been suffering from an asthmatic cough, which developed into lung trouble, and after visiting two Sanitariums and Colorado, without effect, she returned to her home on September 11, and fell asleep in Jesus on Sabbath morning, September 23. Not long before she passed away she chose as her text, 'They shall see his face.'

Her funeral was representative of all the churches, and Christian workers came from different parts of Ontario and Quebec. The Rev. Mr. Cowser read an obituary sketch of her life, and the Rev. Mr. Watch spoke of her personal friends and coworkers, the Rev. Dr. Tucker for the many boys and girls she had helped, and Mr. George Hague, of Montreal, for those who had first encouraged her work in Canada. The fragrance of a good life never dies, and the fruitage of this life only eternity will know, yet of herself she was scarcely heard to speak, but of the grace of God she was a faithful witness.

Basil the Hermit,

(By Arthur W. Cooke.)

Mr. William Canton, in one of the chapters of his recent Christmas book, 'A Child's Book of Saints,' has told the legend of a strange mediaeval figure in his own beautiful and suggestive way. On one of the hills near Ancyra, Basil the Hermit stood day and night on a pillar of stone.



MRS. BILBROUGH-WALLACE.

many,' and all the children from this home have been men and women of God. Miss Bilbrough was converted when attending a boarding-school at Kelso, Scotland, under the preaching of the late Dr. Horatius Bonar, whose hymns we sing. Dr. Bonar became deeply interested in her and her work, and the correspondence between them, for many years, was not ordinary letter writing; it was the fellowship of pure hearts, written in the presence of the King.

In 1869, drawn by the needs of the neglected children of East London, she entered into rescue work with Miss Annie McPherson, of the Industrial Home, Spitalfields. In 1870 she commenced her life work, when in association with Miss McPherson she brought the first party of orphan boys and girls to Canada. The need of a home as a distributing centre was immediately felt,