

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

VERY HELPFUL.

Let John Ruskin speak. His venerable father has passed away at the ripe old age of seventy-nine. He rests in the quiet God's acre of Shirley. No hopeless heathen symbol pollutes that marble slab. But there we read the tribute of the cultured son to his father's Christian worth. It is strikingly suggestive, "His memory is very dear and helpful."

That his memory should be very dear, is surely natural; but that it should be very helpful, is a rich theme for earnest thought. His life very helpful to such a son! then he was no common man.

That John Ruskin should cause it to be engraven there, shows how very much he felt he was indebted to his father's training and his father's life.

Life helpful, very helpful, lies within the reach of every true Christian. The world from the yearning hearts of the discouraged, the adrift, the erring, is ever crying out "Help! Oh, for Jesus' sake help me!" One warm grip from thy hand, one decided word from thy lips, and some undecided one decides for God and the eternal right. You read with thrilling interest the story of Isandula and of Rorke's Drift, and you see there in those sad groups of the unburied dead, that wherever some brave man made his last stand, there others gathered shoulder to shoulder and fell side by side. No decided Christian life is ever lived in vain. Nothing done for Christ is ever lost. The flower may not bloom for a generation, but burst it will. The seed may not ripen into harvest until sown in some far away land, but ripen it will.

Very helpful fathers are sorely needed from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Without them the street corner will turn out its shoals of godless graduates. Does the father despise the work and the work of Christ, then we may be almost sure the sons will be the leaders in everything unmanly and vile. But with very helpful fathers, the home becomes a power vital with Godwardness and Godlikeness. How suggestive the boyish sarcasm, "Is your father a Christian? Well, I don't know, but if he is, he is not working much at it just now." It was a very foolish question to put to a child, yet that child gives most undesignedly a fearfully vivid picture of sad, sad home life, by far too common. How very different when the boy heard his godly father charged with atrocious sin, with one indignant glance he looks the slanderer in the face and calmly says, "You great daft thing you," scornfully turned on his heel and walked away. Very foolish fathers may urge their minister to guide their wayward sons, "a good talking to." No, the better way is, let the father be a very helpful one to his sons in all true manhood and all true piety, and the day will come when those same sons will say, "Thank God I had such a noble father." If a father's piety is worth a straw, the flower will be family religion, the eternal harvest, family salvation.

Very helpful mothers are also sorely needed everywhere. Frivolous mothers, over-wrought mothers, are children to be loathed, to be thought a burden and a curse? Queenly motherhood joyously welcomes the God-sent, and lovingly helps the dearest to start aright from a mother's knee to the throne of God. Dress, society, accomplishments, all have their use and their place, but the true glory of the house-mother is, when her memory is very dear and helpful. The daughters may toil through life in unlettered obscurity, or they may rise to cultured fame and fortune, but there is ever before them the sainted mother. Did she bend the knee in darkest hours of life, they do it; had she hallowed songs for cradle and sanctuary, so have they; is her memory very dear and helpful, so assuredly will be theirs.

Ministers, very dear and helpful are urgently needed. The present cry is, give us popular men for the pulpit, the platform and the parlour. Deep strong-toned piety may be tolerated or taken for granted. Men are wanted who will fill the pews, there is too seldom the wise outlook for men who will fill the heart.

The chiselled sentences of the essay elocutionist may be admired for a pastorate beautifully short, but where are the spiritual giants going forth from the churches.

No doubt it is easier to raise mushrooms than veteran Christians. But souls in blood earnest must have helpful ministers, men whose every sermon is an inspiration to the man longing for better life; men

whose whole life is a benediction. Unless our pulpits are filled with such helpful pastors, what is to be the destiny of the weak, the tempted, the fallen. Wisely we honour the power and the experience of our gray-haired judges, physicians and statesmen, but over many a pulpit may it be written, no gray hair need apply. I have heard many a soldier tell the story of his life in the long winter nights, but it was always the story of the veteran that moved the most. And this I know as a verity, that Christ's ministers who have been most helpful to my own soul and life, were fathers who had grown gray in the Master's work.

The young minister full of consecrated enthusiasm has his own place and power, but in the saintly life behind the words, there lies the secret of far reaching helpfulness.

The glory of the ministry lies not in its power to please, to fascinate, but to mould Christ-like, to help Godwards. The brilliant sermons may be admired and then forgotten in a week, but the men saved by the strong grip of their minister's hand and life, look up in his face and feel "but for him I had been an utter wreck."

'Tis like a breeze of ocean air to read the helpful words and deeds of the men and women who have gone before? What young man can forget the story of how the generous Jonathan strengthened David's hands in God. It was an hour dark as midnight to David, but there a fresh start was taken in the upward life. No wonder that Jonathan's memory was peculiarly dear and helpful.

Does the eloquent Apollos need the curtain lifted and the glory of Jesus revealed, then God will bring him to the warm fireside of Aquilla and Priscilla. No harsh criticism, no iceberg isolation, nay but the yearning heart, willingly and lovingly revealing all the sublime wonders of Calvary and of Pentecost. Would he ever forget those humble helpers, never, no never.

And have not many before them the memory of some precious book which has been specially helpful in life's dark past? Has not the weary pilgrim found his progress wondrously helped, and has not the venerable patriarch enjoyed many a saintly hour of rest ere he heard the chimes from the farther shore? Have not souls stricken with doubt and apathy found in still hours, on the Mount of Olives, faith and triumphant hope? Does not the enormous proportion of novels taken out from all our public libraries awaken gravest thought? Does not the wretched trash, scattered broadcast on every railway ever sadden you by its profligacy and scoundrelism? Whatever men of the world may demand from their literature, Christian literature imperatively needs to be fascinating, pure and helpful. I know of no nobler use for Christian wealth and talent than to gather such a literature in every shape and form, and scatter it broadcast over the land, so as "to clamp the enemies guns and sweep the field with the bayonet."

Has any mortal helped you to a nobler life, then speak out your thanks, be it to mother, father, friend or minister. It may cheer some darkly brooding hour, when men are tempted to ask, "What good have I ever done? Hear a woman's tersely ringing words:

"What worth in eulogy's blandest breath,
When whispered in ears that are hushed in death
No, no, if you have but a word of cheer,
Speak it, while I am alive to hear."

Whatever you may aspire to be, to do, have the ever glowing ambition to leave the world better than you found it. And then living here, or glorified hereafter, some human being may look back and say, "Thy memory is very dear and helpful."

Walkerton.

ROBERT C. MOFFAT.

THE HINITES ON HISTORY.

If a man were to come to you and say, I have the philosopher's stone, prove that I have not, you would laugh at him as a simpleton. If he had it and wished you to believe that he had it, he ought surely not merely to assert that he had it but to show to you by converting iron into gold before your eyes that he had it. When the apostles went forth among the Gentiles they did not say, our religion is from heaven, prove that it is not; what they said was, our religion is from heaven, listen and we will show you that it is. Now if the Hinites expect to get rational followers, instead of asking the world to prove that their theory is false, they should go to work and prove that it is true. This of course they try to do, they go to prophecy, history,

ethnology, and philology for proofs. Their views of the origin of the Irish, I shall consider in this letter.

1. The Hinites affirm that we have "ample evidence" that the tribe of Dan settled in the north of Ireland about the time of the Assyrian captivity, that is about 721 B.C.

It is not mentioned in any historical work, ancient or modern, that the tribe of Dan settled in Ireland. How then did Mr. Hine come to know they did? The Tuatha de Danann he says, spoke Hebrew, and must have been Israelites of the tribe of Dan. The Tuatha de Danann are not mentioned by any Hebrew, Greek or Roman writer; our first account of them is from Irish fabulists. Sir James Ware, one of the most learned antiquarians that Ireland has produced, admits that it was St. Patrick that introduced the knowledge of letters among the Irish. Now as St. Patrick did not land in Ireland till the year 431 after Christ, it follows that there can be no Irish history of an earlier date than that year. The truth is that there is no Irish history in existence written before the tenth century. Tighearnach and Marianus Scotus may be considered as the founders of the school of Irish annalists; the first of these died in the year 1088, and the latter in the year 1086. But even if the history of Ireland had been written as early as the days of St. Patrick, it would be utterly impossible to give an account of things which had happened at as early a period as the time of the Assyrian captivity. It would puzzle our best Canadian historians to give an account of the loves and wars and expeditions of the Indians in this country not only 1152 years ago, but even 400 years ago. How then could we expect an Irish annalist writing in St. Patrick's day, and having neither books nor monuments to consult, to write an authentic history of Ireland from his own time back to the days of Jeremiah? D'Arcy McGee in his very interesting "Popular History of Ireland" speaks of "what the old bards and story-tellers have handed down concerning the history of Ireland before it became Christian," that is before St. Patrick's day, as "wild and uncertain traditions of which we have neither documentary nor monumental evidence." It is gross ignorance, not only of the history of Ireland but of general history, that would lead any one to suppose that we have reliable information about what took place in Ireland 721 B.C. We have not even the slightest evidence that the existence of Ireland was at that period known to the civilized world.

It is a sure thing that Hebrew was not spoken in Ireland in St. Patrick's day. How Mr. Hine knows that it was spoken there 1152 years before his day, it is difficult to say.

It may be useful to give a brief sketch of the history of Ireland according to the historians upon whom Mr. Hine relies for his facts. Ireland then, according to these historians, was uninhabited until the year 2025 B.C. In that year, and on the 14th of May, Partholan, a wicked Greek who had murdered his father and mother, landed on the coast of Munster. He had with him 1,000 soldiers and some women. His race was wholly cut off by pestilence 300 years after his arrival. Nemedius, also a Greek, and the eleventh in descent from Noah, arrived about thirty years after the descendants of Partholan had perished. His posterity were greatly troubled by African pirates, and had to leave the country. Under the guidance of Simon Breac, or speckled Simon, they steered for Greece. The next settlers of Ireland were the Firbolgs. They were from Greece and were the descendants of Simon Breac. The Firbolgs were displaced by the Tuatha de Danann. They too were Greeks. They went however from Greece to Denmark, where they lived for some time. From Denmark they came to Scotland, and from Scotland to Ireland. They landed in Ireland some time before the days of Moses. They were great necromancers. They could quell storms, cure diseases, and foretell events; they could also restore to life those who had fallen in battle, and bring them into the field the next day. They were mighty warriors. They slew 100,000 of the Firbolgs in one battle. They carried a wonderful stone with them from Denmark; it was called *lia fail*, or the stone of destiny. They used it to crown their kings upon. The Gael were the fifth and last colonists of Ireland. They were descended from Gathelus, the son of a king of Scythia by Scota a daughter of Pharaoh. This Gathelus was a very great personage. He lived in Egypt in the time of Moses, and was on very intimate terms with the great prophet and legislator of the Jews. His descendants went from Egypt to Spain and lived in that