

The Family Circle.

THE OLD THANKSGIVING DAYS.

ERNEST W. SHURTLEIFF.

Sitting silent by the window, while the evening's fading beam
Turns to lonely gray, the winter's silvered sky,
Not a voice to break the reverie of thought's
too pensive dream,
Not a footstep—only memory and I.
From the past the veil seems lifted, and I am a
child once more;

On the hearth again the old-time fagots blaze.
Hush! again I hear the voice of the guests
about the door,
In the greetings of the old Thanksgiving Days

All the air outside is frosty, and in gusts the
blithe winds blow,
And I hear the distant sleigh-bells faintly ring,
And against the time-touched windows comes
the purring, stirring snow.

Like the brushing of a passing angel's wing
But within, O, see the faces that are smiling
'round the board.

How they shine with love, and gratitude, and
praise!
Hushed the voices are a moment for the thank-
ing of the Lord,
In the blessings of the old Thanksgiving Days.

There were all the joyful kinsfolk gathered in
that smiling host,
Aged sire and laughing children, sweet and
fair,

Sorrow haunted not that banquet with her
poor, unwelcome ghost,
Peace and gladness were the unseen angels
there.

O, the stories, and the music, and the friendly,
blithesome jest!

O, the laughter and the merry, merry plays!
Was there ever more of heaven in a happy
mortal's breast,
Than was with us in the old Thanksgiving
Days?

That was years ago, and curfews for the loved
have rung since then.

As to-night I watch the dawning evening star,
In my dreams I see the mansions Christ pre-
pared in heaven for men—

It is there to-night the absent kindred are—
It is there their feast is ready, and I hold the
fancy dear.


That they often turn to earth their loving
gaze,
And perhaps they, too, are dreaming, as they
see me sitting here.

Of the sweetness of the old Thanksgiving
Days.

Written for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

EWEN M'QUARRIE.

BY R. A. B.

FTY years and more ago, the old
farm house stood on the banks of the
West River. As you came along
by what was then the main road
between Pictou and Colchester,
you saw it down in the hollow,
just after you had passed the spot
where the old oak tree stood, and
where to-day the little hostelry of

Durham village stands. If you were travel-
ling westward it lay on your left hand. It was
not a very pretentious building, but was cosy
and clean, in appearance and reality. It was
built on a little knoll rising some twenty feet
above the surrounding interval or meadow
land. A little crater like hollow in this knoll,
showing where the cellar was, is all that you
can now see of the place. It was a "braw"
house, however, in the times we speak of. Long
and low, like all the farm houses built by the
Highlanders of that region, it was as snug look-
ing a place as one could see between the Ten
Mile Brook and Pictou. It was, of course,
built of frame, and was shingled from the eaves
to the roof tree. Both the house and the
neighboring barn were whitewashed every year,
and the pure color contrasted well with the
deep green of the grass, and the lighter hue of
the foliage of the group of elms that grew about
the place, and shaded it from the burning heat
of July and August. A hundred feet from the
doorway, and full in sight, the little West River
babbled on its way to the Harbour and Strait.
The opposite bank was steep and abrupt, and
was crowded with a dense growth of spruce.
When first Angus Sutherland and I saw the
place, we allowed it was as pretty a spot as
in our long two days tramp we had seen. It
was on a cool September evening and the sun
was just setting behind Mount Thorne, and all
the way from the Green Hill, right around by
the valley head to Patrick's Mountain in the
north west, the woods were full of autumn's
glory, the rock maples being decked in gorge-
ous colouring. The quietness of the scene
lent to it an added impressiveness, for the only
sounds we could hear were the cawing of
some rooks, the rush of the water, and the
tinkle of a few cow bells whose bearers were
pasturing on the hill slopes around us. We
were right glad, however, to find our way to
the farm house, and to find old Ewen Mc-
Quarrie at home to welcome us, and tell us to
sleep soundly for the night before discussing
business matters.

Our business was not of a very weighty
character. We had heard of Ewen and his
place, and had made up our minds to try to
induce him to let us board with him whilst
we had to spend the fall and most of the winter
in the valley. The fact is we were both of us
aspirants for the ministry, and were there to
become students in as primitive a seminary as
probably was ever organized.

The Synod of Acadia in these days was
weak and poor, but its members had a high
conception of the kind of education a Presby-
terian minister should have, and that concep-
tion they were resolved to realize if possible.
Some half a dozen young men were willing to
give themselves to the work of the ministry,
but to send them to Scotland was impossible.
The Kirk Synod did that with their men, and
not a few of them failed to return; but the
Antiburghers wanted to have their students
under their own eye. So as the two most
scholarly men of their Church lived, the one
in Pictou and the other on the Green Hill,
they resolved to start their first Hall in a little
country school house that stood in a clump of
spruce and hemlock trees, about a quarter of
a mile along the road from Ewen McQuarrie's
house, and about a mile from the Durham
church. This last was a plain, barn-like build-
ing, and its minister was a famous preacher
in Gaelic, with which language everybody in
that country side was more or less familiar.
Angus and myself understood enough of it to
get along, but were wholly unqualified to
preach in it. We were natives of Cumberland
County, where the bulk of the folk are English,
and Methodists at that, and all the Gaelic we
heard was round our own fire sides. But to
return to Ewen. After making some objections
to the effect that he thought it hardly fair to
his sister, who kept house for him, to give her
so much extra bother, he consented, upon her
avowment that our company would be cheering
on the long winter nights, to receive us as
boarders for the three or four months of the
season.

Ewen, we speedily found, was a bit of
a character. He had been left a widower with-
out family when still a man under thirty years
of age, and had never remarried, so that after
thirty years of single life, he did not differ
greatly in his notions from any old bachelor,
excepting that he was not so "crusty" as such
characters generally are. He had accumulated,
not so much by farming as by investments in
shipping, a very decent fortune, and preferred
to live here in the healthy solitude of the
country, rather than amidst the stir of some
large town. Having for some five years led a
seafaring life, his mind had been broadened
by what he had seen of the world, and he was
less conservative and critical than many Celtic
natures are. Having plenty of leisure time
during the winter, he felt considerable interest
in our work as students, and being well
grounded in the Shorter and Larger Cate-
chisms, he could take his part in many of the
impromptu discussions that arose, when on a
cold night we would gather around the big
open fire place (stoves were scarcely known
then) where the logs blazed merrily. I think
I see the group still. Flora McQuarrie busily
spinning, Angus and I conning our books in
a rather listless fashion, and Ewen of the
white locks, as his neighbors called him, sitting
there right in front of the glow telling yarns of
his cruising days, or oftener debating some
"kittle" point with us budding theologues.

More than once during these wintry days
the old farm house became a college indeed, for
when the schoolhouse, being rickety, became
unbearably cold, professor and students would
adjourn to Ewen's big kitchen, and there con-
tinue our work. On such occasions Ewen was
a patient and sometimes puzzled listener, once
venturing to ask me when the class was dis-
missed: Did we learn theology by delving
among bones, and forgetting that the folk about
us had breath, and wanted not mouldy but
fresh bread?

Occasionally at the Durham church we
were favored by having a strange minister
preach, more especially at a communion season.
When this happened we were always on the
lookout for a criticism from Ewen. He was, if
frank, always fair in his judgments, and we gen-
erally conceded that, in a word or two, he could
hit off the weaknesses of a preacher better than
even our preceptors could. "Spiced ginger-
bread" was his comment when a somewhat
ornate orator had finished. "Yelloquence,"
was another word he sometimes used. Some
seven miles away there was a minister who
used to work very hard when in the pulpit, and
we never heard his method more curtly describ-
ed than by Ewen, who said: "When that
mans through you're tired and he's tired." In
Colchester, one of the ministers was somewhat
fond of parading his linguistic gifts in the
pulpit, but he never did it at Durham again
after Ewen thanked him, when the service was
over, for the few admirable English selections
he had introduced during his sermon.

Altogether during two winters at the Hall,
we found in Ewen an entertaining and instruct-
ive host. When at the commencement of the
third session we returned, we were saddened
to find that the old man had been stricken with
cancer. His mind was as clear as ever, but the
anguish he endured in body rendered him able
to see us but seldom. Still, though we could
not stay at his house, we contrived to spend
each Friday afternoon with him, and he liked
and looked forward to our visits.

When strong and well he had always con-
ducted family worship himself, but now he seem-
ed pleased to hear either Angus or myself pray

with and for him. As February was drawing
to a close his strength failed rapidly, and one
afternoon he sent for us to come and see him.
We found him walking far along "the Valley
of the Shadow," and evidently not afraid. He
said scarce anything but asked us to read to
him. By turns we read and prayed, and as the
wintry sun was throwing its evening beams
over the snow-clad fields and ice-bound river he
began to repeat brokenly, in Gaelic, snatches
from the Psalms. Soon the quavering voice
was hushed and he fell asleep, and as Angus
and I came softly from the room, we looked
sadly at each other, and he said: "A true
and righteous soul has passed. He is blessed,
for they that are pure in heart shall see God."

PULPIT, PRESS AND PLATFORM.

Evangelical Messenger: The men that move
the world are the ones who do not let the world
move them.

Golden Rule: To preach about Christ is to
present a bill of fare, to preach Christ is to
spread a feast.

Joseph Cook. A church silent on the ques-
tion of temperance discredits itself as much as
a church silent on the question of dishonesty.

F. W. Farrar, D.D. Men are, and ever
will be, what their wives and sisters, and above
all, their mothers, tend to make them, by
influence which begins with the cradle and ends
only with the grave.

D. L. Moody. Study how to use the Bible
so as to walk "with God" in close commun-
ion, also, so as to gain a working knowledge
of Scripture for leading others to Christ. An
old minister used to say that the cries of
neglected texts were always sounding in his
ears, asking why he did not show how import-
ant they were.

Mid Continent. The injunction of the
apostle is, "Preach the Word." That was
the apostolic practice, and upon it the divine
blessing rested. The Word is the instrument
for the accomplishment of the task to which the
ministry is set. More preaching of the Word
and less fine sermonising would greatly en-
hance the usefulness of present day ministers.

Tennessee Methodist. The Sunday news-
paper is one of the supreme evils of this age.
It is colossal in the sweep of its influence for
wrong. It stabs our Holy Sabbath—one of the
bulwarks of our civilization. The contents of
the average Sunday paper are such as render
it wholly unfit to enter the homes of refined,
decent people. That it should be patronized
in any way whatsoever by Christian people is
a surprise and a shame.

G. C. Lorimer, D.D. Once having tasted
of His grace the soul is never willing to be
parted from its Lord. And as the years roll
on, and the shadows lengthen, the cry, "Abide
with me," becomes more pathetically intense.
Blessed the man, as the mists gather around
his feet and the sun is going down, who still
yearns for this company? Blessed is he who,
from past experience, knows that if Christ be
with him, even the chills of death shall never
extinguish the heart flame!

J. Munro Gibson, D.D.: Test Christ by
every means, and then, if you do believe in
Christ, believe heartily. Christianity might
not again build cathedrals, but it would make
a noble manhood and womanhood, raise
temples of brotherly co-operation, and create
a Europe that would be like the garden of the
Lord for beauty and amity. These things
would be accomplished by and through the
men and women whose beliefs had struck down
to the very roots of their natures. Christianity
was now in the wilderness. There was no
Sabbath rest, no Sabbath land, the great
leaders were going or gone; nothing seemed
much nearer solution. Christendom was
divided; men were worldly-minded; and all
the world's vaunted progress seemed as much
an optical delusion as ever it had been. The
times were thunderous, there was much to
make the heart quake, but men need not
despair, for Christ was abroad—Christ, who
had felt the down draught of every human
difficulty, had got as near to sinning as he
could get, and knew how near a weak man
might get to God. The church's safety lay in
getting a new vision of this Christ, in following
His leadership and believing in Him against
all odds.

Teacher and Scholar.

BY REV. W. A. J. MARTIN, TORONTO.

Dec. 1st, 1895. } DAVID ANOINTED KING. { 1 SAM. xvi. 1-13.

GOLDEN TEXT.—1 SAM. xvi. 7.

MEMORY VERSES.—12, 13.

CATECHISM.—Q. 93-97.

HOME READINGS.—M, 1 SAM. xv. 24-35 T.
1. SAM. xvi. 1-13. H. P. S. xxiii. 1-6. Th. P. S.
lxxviii. 60-72 F. P. S. lxxxix. 15-24. S. Isa. lv.
1-13. Sub. P. S. cxxxix. 1-12.

With the terrible words "The Lord hath
rejected thee from being king," Samuel turned
away from his interview with Saul at Gilgal.
Saul sought to detain him but the rending of
Samuel's robe in the king's hand merely served
as an illustration for Samuel to press more
closely home the thought that God had rent
the kingdom from Saul and given it to another.
Then after slaying the Amorite King Agag
whom Saul had spared alive, Samuel returned
to his home at Ramah, where he brooded over
the rejection of Saul. His heart was filled
with sorrow for the great man in whom he
had been so bitterly disappointed, but he fear-
ed also for the welfare of the nation which he
feared would be rent asunder if any other
arose for Saul's deposition. How ready was
even the God-fearing Samuel to forget God,
and to make heavy his life with worry, when
he should have remembered that God was over
all. One lesson shows how the Lord aroused
His servant from his despondency. He first
reminded Samuel that He had rejected Saul,
and thus brings acquiescence on Samuel's part;
then He commissions His servant to carry out
His will. The very best cure for grief is found
in cheerful acquiescence in God's way, and
prompt taking up of his work. The work was
one fraught with danger to Samuel; his fears
as to what Saul would do if he found out his
mission were not groundless. Nevertheless
God had sent him and he was ready to go. Let
us follow him in his search for a king, and in
his anointing of the king.

I. The Search for a King—God's
directions were fairly explicit. Samuel was
to go to Bethlehem, and to Jesse's house, and
among Jesse's sons the king would be found.
But the matter was one of present interest only
to Samuel and to God; it therefore, both for
the sake of Samuel's safety, as well as for the
protection of the king when found, and that the
king might be prepared by God against the day
when he should come to his kingdom, it was
necessary that the real purpose of Samuel's
visit should not be known. Hence it was in
connection with a sacrifice—a peace offering,
probably, since in connection with such a sac-
rifice it was customary for the offerer to invite
his friends to join him in eating the portion of
the sacrifice which fell to his lot—that the
anointing of the king was to take place. The
elders of Bethlehem were invited, and Jesse
and his sons were invited. Now Samuel was
on the alert for the future king, and when Eliab,
the eldest son of Jesse, was presented by his
father before the prophet, it seemed that surely
he must be the Lord's choice for he was a
kingly man. Samuel's conception of a king
found its ideal in one who promised to be a
warrior. But God told him that He judged
not from the outward appearance but from the
heart, from the character of the individual
rather than from his physical appearance. It
is not necessary to assume that Jesse had been
told of Samuel's desire to select one of his sons
as king. It was the most natural thing for a
man with seven sons who had been honored
with an invitation to the prophets' feast, to pre-
sent the young men in turn to their host; and
as they came one by one the Lord made it plain
to Samuel that none of these was His chosen
one. Probably Jesse thought the choice had
something to do with attendance at the school
of the prophets over which Samuel presided,
and so it had, but not with that alone. Then
Samuel asked if all Jesse's sons were present.
He was puzzled that the Lord passed them all
by. There was still another, however, the
youngest, a mere lad who had not been consid-
ered of sufficient importance to come to the
feast, but Samuel will have him present before
the feast shall commence. No sooner has David
come than the Lord declares that this is His
choice. He was a fair haired stripling "good-
ly to look to." Through his "beautiful eyes"
looked forth a soul, that stamped him at once
as a man possessed of those hearty qualifications
which God loves, and for these he was chosen.
The search was ended and God's chosen king
in the prophet's presence.

II. The Anointing of the King.—It
was a double one. Samuel anointed him with
the oil which he had brought for that purpose,
and God anointed him with His Holy Spirit
from that day forward. The meaning of these
anointings was apparent to David or his people
at that time. Probably David felt that God
had chosen him for some special service, and
his fitness for that service was evidenced by the
fact that he went back to his calling as a shep-
herd boy, content to await God's time, and
God's leading. In the meantime God wanted
him to attend his father's flock, and David was
wise enough and had character enough
to know that his fitness for any special
service would depend upon his fidelity to
God in his ordinary work. Filled with God's
Spirit, he did "unto the Lord" what his hand
found to do and thus was fitted to be Israel's
greatest king.