

Our Contributors.

ARE THERE ANY CITIZENS IN THIS COUNTRY

BY KNOSONIAN.

Mr. Solomon Aristides came to Ontario a poor man. By hard work, frugal living and good management, he succeeded in making a competence for himself and his family before he had passed middle life. Having some spare time on his hands, and having heard that clean, capable aldermen were much needed in his city, he determined to offer himself as a candidate for municipal honors. The city had dealt generously with him in business matters, and he was willing to show his gratitude by doing something to forward its interests. He issued his address, informing the electors, male and female, that he was willing to serve them in the Council, and asked for their votes and influence. He got neither, but he got something else that he had not expected. Before the ink was dry on his address a deputation from the Star-gazing Association called on him, and asked him what theory he held about

THE RINGS OF SATURN.

Mr. Aristides was somewhat taken aback. He told the deputation that he had not given any special attention to the rings of Saturn, but he was willing to fight municipal rings of all kinds and give the people a clean local government. The deputation withdrew, after informing the candidate that he need not expect the support of the Star-gazing Association. Their corporate vote could not be given to anyone who was not sound on the rings of Saturn.

The deputation had scarcely left the astonished Aristides, when a deputation from another association appeared and wanted to know the candidates views on the water-ways of Mars. He told them that he had not given any special study to Mars. The last time that planet came round he had read something in the papers about a canal system supposed to exist there, but as there was no probability that the city could get its water supply from that source he had not given the matter any serious consideration. He was willing to do all in his power to obtain the best possible supply of good water for the city from any earthly source, but he could not pledge himself to do anything about the other parts of the solar system. The deputation withdrew and resolved to report unfavorably on Mr. Aristides.

The third deputation was from the Pope-Perdition Society. They asked Mr. Aristides in menacing tones if it was true that his aunt's grandmother had been a Roman Catholic. He replied that he had quite a number of aunts, and that each aunt had been favored with two grandmothers but he really could not say whether any of the grandmothers aforesaid had been Roman Catholics or not. The deputation informed Mr. Aristides that unless he could clear up his family record from any taint of popery back as far as Noah he could not get the support of the Pope-Perdition Society at the polls.

The next deputation wished to know if Mr. Aristides held that Bible wines were intoxicating and if so what per centage of alcohol they contained. The candidate assured them that he knew nothing about Bible wine or any other kind. He had been a total abstainer the greater part of his life and if elected he would vote to close the saloons at an earlier hour or close them altogether. The deputation was not quite satisfied.

The next deputation was from the Blue Stocking Brigade. They wished to know if the candidate was in favour of liberating women from the thralldom of their husbands. Mr. Aristides said he held no views on that question. His own wife had never broached it to him. In fact she seemed to enjoy the thralldom very much and had gained about fifty pounds in weight since the thralldom

began. The deputation informed the candidate that he was a male tyrant, and that he might expect nothing but opposition at the polls from their brigade. No candidate could have their support unless he pledged himself to vote in favour of the emancipation of women.

The next deputation was from the Boy's Liberation Society. They wished to know if the candidate would support a measure by which boys might elect their father. Mr. Aristides said he would do nothing of the kind, and the deputation withdrew in high dudgeon, after threatening to defeat the candidate at the polls.

About a dozen other deputations called wanting to know the candidate's views on labour questions, on social questions, and various other kinds of questions. After a little consideration Mr. Aristides decided to withdraw and published a notice to that effect. He had intended to serve the citizens but he discovered that there are no citizens in this county.

As soon as Mr. Aristides had withdrawn Mr. Boodler announced himself a candidate. The deputations all waited upon him and he pledged himself to do everything they asked. Boodler was elected and the good work "goes bravely on."

THE LATE PROFESSOR R. Y. THOMSON.—A TRIBUTE TO HIS MEMORY.

BY REV. I. A. FURNIBILL, LL.B.

Robert Yuille Thomson, son of Thomas Thomson and Elizabeth Yuille, was born in Lanarkshire, Scotland, on the last day of April, 1837. When sixteen months old he was brought to Canada by his parents, who settled on a farm in the County of Huron, about three miles north of Clinton. Here he spent his boyhood days, until, when sixteen years of age, he entered Clinton High School to prosecute his studies preparatory to the ministry. In 1876 he matriculated into Toronto University, gaining honors in all the departments. His course through the university was a most brilliant one. Mathematics, classics and modern languages engaged his attention, and were studied successfully during the first two years. In his third and fourth years his studies in arts were confined to metaphysics, he being a great favorite with the late Prof. Young, who was not slow to discover and develop the talents with which he was so richly endowed. At the same time he took the first and second years' work in theology in Knox College, and notwithstanding the fact that he had thus two sets of competitors with whom to measure his strength, he stood first in every department in theology, and graduated from the university in 1880 "silver medallist" in metaphysics. A year later he completed the theological course in Knox College. The following autumn he took charge, for that session, of Prof. Bryce's classes in Manitoba College, gaining the golden opinions of both professors and students. In the spring he went to the Old Land, spent four months, partly in travel on the continent and partly in study in Germany. Coming back to Edinburgh he studied there during the winter, receiving the degree of B.D., in the month of April.

Having returned to Canada he was in September, 1883, ordained to the ministry and inducted into the pastorate of the united charge of Rodgerville and Chiselhurst, in the Presbytery of Huron. In the month following he was united in marriage to Elizabeth Scott, who ever proved herself to be a suitable and worthy companion to share his joys and sorrows until two years and a half ago, after a lingering illness, borne with patience and resignation, she heard the summons to lay aside the frail body of clay and enter the land of everlasting rest. As preacher and pastor he labored most assiduously and tenderly, endearing himself to an appreciative people who, until the very day of his death, manifested a lively interest in his welfare and work.

He lectured for several sessions in Knox

and Manitoba Colleges, and about the same time went to Germany to further his mental equipment by a course of study there. In 1890 he was called by the General Assembly to the chair of Apologetics and Old Testament Literature in Knox College. Here his work was prosecuted with great vigor, and with marked success. Having completed his second summer's work in Manitoba College he returned to Toronto, and entered with apparent energy upon his fifth session, taking a most active interest in the jubilee services; as president of the Alumni Association, unveiling the portrait of his beloved teacher, Prof. Young, in words so fitly spoken that they will live in the memory of all who heard or read them. No serious apprehensions of immediate danger were in any mind, and as he met with his students on that Friday morning little did either he or they suspect that it was for the last time. In the evening a sudden hemorrhage of the lungs so prostrated him that all hope of further work during the present session was abandoned. All were trusting, however, that under more genial skies he would gain at least a measure of health, when even those who had been in closest correspondence with him were startled by the sad intelligence that Prof. Thomson had passed away.

His mother, now seventy-nine years of age, a brother, six sisters and a host of friends remain to mourn their loss, but to rejoice because of his eternal gain.

To condense into a few paragraphs all one knows, feels and admires in such a man is no easy task; besides it is impossible to do justice to a life so great without seeming to overstep the bounds of truth and indulge in adulation. From this charge all who knew the one whereof we write will exonerate us, as we attempt to give a glimpse of a noble life.

Where to begin, we scarcely know, in a so well rounded life, in which the various parts were so precisely balanced and nicely adjusted. He was studious and at the same time companionable, and whilst a most kindly man and the best friend of the students, no one strove more vigorously and persistently than he for the maintenance of a high standard of proficiency.

Perhaps that with which all were best acquainted was his phenomenal success. To account for this would be to give a full description of the man; for it was not due to any fortuitous circumstance or to any one talent, but to a happy combination of gifts and graces both of head and heart that his foot rested thus early in life on the uppermost rounds of the ladder. His perseverance and thoroughness were great; he was never satisfied with a one sided view of a question, but must go round and round it, examining it from all standpoints, and in all its bearings and relationships. His power of concentration was such that at times the whole mind was so absorbed as to become oblivious of surroundings. "Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well" seemed to be the motto prefixed to all his work. This was especially noticeable when disease had laid its heavy hand upon him, weakening the body, but apparently unable to check the activity of the mind or render it incapable of abundant and well executed labors.

Like all men who must have their knowledge at first hand, and must investigate for themselves everything that comes under their observation, he had his period of doubt and struggle. Amid it all his mind never seemed to waver respecting the great cardinal doctrines of Christianity, and from it he emerged a stronger and a better man. Study in Germany widened the horizon and presented additional problems for solution, but the outcome was that his admiration for the Bible as the word of God was greatly increased. He was familiar with the positions taken by the various schools of higher criticism, but, whilst granting that some of the opinions of the more reverent critics were possible if not probable, he ever stood in fixed antagonism to the radical school, making no admission or concession that would affect, even remotely, the Bible's trustworthiness, or invalidate its claim to be the word of God.

He was highly and deservedly respected and trusted throughout the Canadian church. This was all the more remarkable when we bear in mind that to human eye his sun set before the noon hour was reached, and his work was ended when it was little more than well begun. But so abundant in promise was that beginning, and already so fruitful of good, that many were the prophecies uttered, and high were the expectations raised. His was a mind that would not blink a difficulty, and could not rest until it had exhausted itself in the struggle. He loved the truth fervently and prosecuted the search for, and examination of it with profound reverence and above all with such unquestioning confidence in God, and in the Bible as His book, that he never feared to know the truth, or to make it known to others.

Notwithstanding his studious habits, which led him to neglect his body, he was no recluse either by nature, or of choice, no one enjoyed more than he the half hour after tea in the college corridor and many an hour of most pleasant conversation interrupted study.

His humility kept pace with the progress of his knowledge. No one could possibly be further removed from pride or arrogance because of superior abilities and attainments than he was. Of nothing did he seem to be so unconscious as of personal superiority. The wide extent of what he knew so enlarged the horizon of the knowable and gave hints of the great expanse lying beyond, to which the eye of man may not at present reach, that he felt himself to be but a little child, spelling out a few sentences in the great book of truth.

Of the existence and quality of his tender and affectionate nature, we give no other proof or example than his closing lecture on the life and work of Jeremiah, as with a pathos in which eye, voice, and heart took part in perfect harmony, he described the prophet whose heart overflowed with tender pity and compassion for his fellow-countrymen.

Heavy as was the burden of his sickness, we have yet to find one who ever heard him complain. Severe as was the strain his patience never murmured nor suffered others to compassionate. Not a particle of envy or jealousy did he possess, on the contrary it was his delight to rejoice in the prosperity of others, especially those who had been associated with him in youth. He was most generous in the bestowment of both money and labor, he willingly contributed from his purse to help the needy or to advance any worthy cause; and from his time, to assist a brother minister in his work.

When we approach the sacred spot where the soul is holding communion with heaven, our shoes must be removed, our voice drop to a whisper, and our breath be bated. This correspondence which was so continually maintained between his soul and his Father in heaven, that it never seemed to be interrupted, evidenced a most intimate, reverent, trustful friendship. Never can that kneeling form, and calm, earnest voice be forgotten, as petition followed praise up to the throne of grace. Here many a battle was fought and won. Here power was secured for the work to be accomplished during the day; for, strange as it may seem to some, the more work he had to do the longer the time he gave to his private devotions; and under the benign influence of heaven's approving smile he lived and worked throughout the day, honoring God and honored by Him.

As a student he was held in honor by his fellow-students; as a pastor he was loved by those whom he led beside the still waters; as a professor he was looked up to by the students, and was esteemed as a brother dear by those associated with him in professorial work, whilst those who knew him best loved him most, and will cherish his memory as a sacred thing. Conscious of our loss and feeling ourselves poorer to-day, we stand with uncovered head and bowed heart in the presence of this mysterious dispensation of