

Our Contributors.

THE MAN WHO READS.

BY KNOXIAN.

In his admirable lecture on Joseph Howe, Principal Grant says that Howe knew his Bible and Shakespeare, and the man who knows these two books is an educated man. Would that all the educators of Ontario held as sound opinions on educational questions as the Principal of Queen's. The man who knows his Bible and Shakespeare is an educated man in the best sense of that much abused word, even though he may, like Howe, have taken his course in the hard school of daily toil, and his degree in a printing office. It is positively refreshing to hear the Principal of a college speak in that way.

We are quite sure the learned Principal would not object to adding one or two books to Mr. Howe's list. The Shorter Catechism for Systematic Theology, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress for a text book in terse Saxon, and Macaulay for "balanced splendour" in composition would not be a bad increase to Mr. Howe's library. Right sure are we that the eloquent Nova Scotian knew these three books and hundreds more, but he studied the Bible as a classic, and tried to master Shakespeare, probably all the earlier part of his life, and it was mainly the study of the Bible and Shakespeare that made him Joseph Howe. And by the way, Joseph Howe was one of the greatest orators this continent ever produced. For immediate effect he was second to none. Had Christopher Columbus heard Howe's great speech in Detroit he would have been glad that he discovered America. If the great navigator could rise from his grave and take a look at Quebec just now he might possibly be haunted with some doubts as to the usefulness of his discovery, but one good speech from Joseph Howe or George Brown, were they here, would reassure him.

Howe was one of the men that read and read good books. Whatever may be said about "unborn aptitudes," one thing at least is clear: No man in our day, no matter what his unborn aptitudes, can make a deep and permanent impression on his fellow men unless he holds almost daily intercourse with master minds of some type. Spurgeon held daily intercourse with the master minds of the Puritan Theology, and any fair man will admit the power of the Puritan masters, however much he may dislike their theology. Gladstone deals directly with Homer and Demosthenes. Ten thousand men retain more or less influence over their fellow men, simply because they keep their minds in daily contact with the Bible. We all know fairly successful ministers who have not one strong point except the strength they get from Bible study. We have all seen private Christians who had a peculiar kind of influence over their neighbours. People could not understand it. They had no money, no influential connections, no social position that gave them influence, and still they had influence. If you examine their Bible the secret will soon come out. The well-thumbed leaves and the pencillings opposite the rich passages show that they got their influence from contact with the mind of Paul, and of Isaiah and of David, and most of all from contact with the mind of the Master Himself.

To go to the root of the question, in what other ways can an ordinary man get mental strength if he does not get it from contact with minds stronger than his own. How can he get knowledge if he does not go where the knowledge is to be had? Mind, we said an ordinary man. The spring poet, and the preacher who needs no preparation, and the other preacher who can make sixteen sermons before breakfast, and the silent philosopher who fancies himself wiser than Solomon, and the theologian who knows all that took place before Adam was made, and the travelling brother who can convert a whole town at a time and promptly report the proceedings to the daily press, these are not ordinary men. They don't want information or mental power from anybody. They are a law to themselves. They are above rule.

Ordinary mortals, however, who have laid on them the important and responsible duty of leading and instructing their fellow men, do frequently feel, and at times feel most keenly, the want of inspiration and power. How are they to get ideas, to get power, to get inspiration, to get that certain something that makes a man strong to lead, and apt to teach? One way is undoubtedly by contact with master minds, and contact with master minds must be mainly through cold type. The majority of the master thinkers are dead, and those that are alive are too busy to talk much with anybody. Tennyson saw very few people, but you can get his poems for a moderate sum from any bookseller. Gladstone is so busy on his Home Rule Bill that he would probably not be at home for a smaller Canadian than Edward Blake. His writings can be had in any bookstore. Macaulay is a delightful man to read, but they say conversing with him was not a very pleasant kind of exercise. In fact if we hold converse with master minds at all it must be mainly through their books.

If power is not to be obtained by reading great books, will somebody tell us how it is to be obtained. By conversation, does somebody say? Well, bright, lively conversation is a good thing no doubt. There is only one kind of a living creature more entertaining than a bright, lively man, and that is a bright, lively woman. Conversation has its uses, but if a man has to move, the big battalions he must get more motive power

than can be obtained in ordinary conversation, especially ecclesiastical conversation. Smith moved something at the last Presbytery meeting, Jones is put on the ornamental committee, Brown is at his old business of wire-pulling: these may be momentous facts, but somehow or another they don't help a man much if he is trying to impress his fellow men for good. There is no power in them. A parrot could be taught to repeat them.

Dr. Oliver in his recently-published book says: "With all our increased culture, our pulpit has not increased in power." The Doctor is no doubt referring to Scotland, but cannot the same thing be said about Canada. With all our talk about High Schools, and Public Schools, and Collegiate Institutes, and colleges, and Universities, and "full courses," and bursaries, and scholarships and degrees, and academic honours of various kinds, has our pulpit increased in power? In proportion to the whole number, are there more front rank men in the pulpit now in Canada than there were, say, thirty years ago? Are there as many?

Has our boasted educational system increased the power and learning of the Bench and Bar? Some fairly good judges do not hesitate to say that both Bench and Bar have distinctly retrograded in point culture.

Has the quality of our public men improved in proportion to their number. The reverse is notoriously the case. The Parliament of old Canada had a larger number of first class men thirty years ago than could be found in any Ottawa Parliament during the last ten years.

Popular education raises the average culture, but it does absolutely nothing more. Men of power in every walk in life must be made just as Joseph Howe was made—by their own personal exertion.

THOUGHTS FOR HARVEST THANKSGIVING.

The harvest truly is plenteous.—Matthew ix. 37.

There are various kinds of harvests. The student's harvest is thought and learning. The commercial man's harvest is profit and the accumulation of wealth. The soldier's, worldly glory. The politician's, a great name. The farmer's increase of stocks and herds, and of the fruits of the earth. The harvest of the Christian is the improved moral and religious state of mankind.

"In all labour there is profit," and the profit of all labour is its harvest. A bountiful harvest should produce feelings of gratitude and thankfulness. There are, however, harvests which do not excite gratitude and thanks. He who reads bad books reaps pollution of mind. The dishonest tradesman reaps uneasiness of conscience. The drunkard reaps physical disease and moral corruption. The indolent farmer reaps thistles and weeds.

May I ask what kind of seed we are sowing? "Whatever a man sows that shall he also reap." All our words and deeds are seeds which are sure to produce a crop and yield a harvest.

Our Saviour makes the natural harvest illustrate great and high moral lessons:—

1. To secure a plenteous harvest it is essential to sow in properly prepared ground.—Matthew xiii.
2. To sow at the appropriate and appointed time. It is useless to sow when the season is past.
3. To sow proper and good seed. To sow barley and expect a crop of wheat is absurd. To live an ungodly life and expect a happy end is equally foolish.
4. To sow with diligence and industry. "He who will not sow by reason of the cold, shall doubtless beg in harvest and have nothing."
5. To sow and wait in patience. (James v. 7.) Seed must have natural time to develop.
6. To sow seeking the divine blessing. Pray about it. "Paul planteth; Apollos watereth; but God giveth the increase."

To show gratitude and thankfulness we should.—

1. Give God the first fruits.—Prov. iii. 9; Lev. xxiii. 10-14.
2. Not forget the poor, but leave the corners and the gleanings.—Lev. xix. 9-10; xxiii. 22; Deut. xxvi. 19.

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THE PILGRIMS OF IONA.

BY REV. JAMES BEGG, LIBERTON, MIDLOTHIAN.

The following paper by the late Dr. Begg, which appeared in 1842, has been forwarded by an esteemed correspondent with a request for its reproduction in THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN:—

The idea that the prelates of England or of any other country can trace a lineal descent to the apostles of our Lord is a delusive fiction, only fitted for the dark ages. It is put forth by men who are either grossly ignorant themselves, or who are testing the power of mere continued and dogmatic assertion on the ignorant credulity of the multitude at large. This has been abundantly and clearly proved by many authors, and especially (of late) by Archbishop Whately, of Dublin, in his work on "The Kingdom of Christ;" by Mr. Killin in the first section of the "Plea of Presbytery;" by the Rev. Mr. Lorimer in his "Manual of Presbytery;" and by Dr. Brown, of Langton, in his able and learned treatise on

"Puseyite Episcopacy." To such treatises we refer our readers; but meantime, perhaps one of the most striking illustrations of the futility of this pretence on the part of England is the undoubted fact that she derived at first from Scotland, and from Scotch Presbyterians, a large proportion of her Christianity.

Our readers must all have heard of Iona, a small isle on our western shores, containing the remains of an ancient church, and the sepulchres of many of our Scottish kings. When the famous Dr. Johnson was travelling through Scotland during the last century, complaining with more or less justice of the want of trees, the want of roads, the want of tidiness in the houses, and of learning in the colleges, even he burst into a fit of generous enthusiasm when he stood amidst the venerable ruins of Iona. This was the place where, in early ages, the solitary lamp of Truth was displayed amidst the surrounding darkness, and whence savage tribes and roving barbarians derived the benefits of civilization and the blessings of religion. The English sage, forgetting, amidst better feelings, his lofty bigotry, could have no sympathy with the man whose patriotism, and even piety, did not burn brighter amidst such a hallowed scene. And yet, the primitive college of Iona was a mere brotherhood of Scotch Presbyters, who lived together in the bonds of Christian love, maintaining, in those early ages, the simplicity of the faith and the purity of the institutions of Christ, and sending Christianity to England, long before the corruptions of the man of sin had been established in Britain, and whilst England was to a great extent only a land of savages.

This subject has been often discussed, and is considered at length by Dr. Brown, from whose excellent work the following extracts are made. Let our readers imagine a period soon after the Christian Era, when England was divided into a number of separate kingdoms, each a horde of barbarians, and sunk in all the grossness of pagan idolatry. Bede, the historian, informs us that at this period Oswald, King of the Angles (one of those small kingdoms) "sent to the elders of the Scots, amongst whom he had been baptized, that they might send him a bishop,* by whose doctrine and ministry the nation of Angles, which he governed, might be instructed in the Christian faith, and receive the sacraments." The matter was accordingly discussed by the presbyters of Iona, who ordained Cormac to that office. His efforts were not successful and he soon returned. Another meeting of Presbytery was held to receive his report, and "in the assembly of the elders he made relation how that in teaching he could do the people no good to the which he was sent; forasmuch as they were folks that might not be reclaimed—of a hard capacity and fierce nature." The elders debated long what should be done. At length Aidan, who seems to have been only a layman, rose and addressed them, and they were so much struck with his wisdom that they resolved to send him to England. "The faces and eyes of all who sat there were turned to him, they diligently weighed what he said, and determined that he was worthy of the episcopal office and that he should be sent to instruct the unbelieving and illiterate; it being proved that he was supereminently endowed with the gift of discretion, which is the mother of virtues." At the death of Aidan, the same presbyters of Iona sent Finan to succeed him. The efforts of both were crowned with success. "For," says the learned Usher, "by the ministry of Aidan was the kingdom of Northumberland recovered from paganism; whereunto belonged then, beside the shire of Northumberland and the lands beyond it unto the Edinburgh Frith, Cumberland also and Westmoreland, Lancashire, Yorkshire and the Bishopric of Durham; and by the means of Finan not only was the kingdom of the East Saxons, which contained Essex, Middlesex and half of Hertfordshire, regained, but also the large kingdom of Mercia converted first to Christianity; which comprehended under it Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Leicestershire, Rutlandshire, Northamptonshire, Lincolnshire, Huntingdonshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Shropshire, Nottinghamshire, Cheshire and the other half of Hertfordshire. The Scottish that professed no subjection to the Church of Rome were they that sent preachers for the conversion of these countries, and ordained bishops to govern them." To the same purpose Dr. Jamieson states that: "It is evident from the testimony of the most ancient and most respectable historian of South Britain, that by means of Scottish missionaries, or those whom they had instructed and ordained, not only the Northumbrians, but the Middle Angles, the Mercians and East Saxons, all the way to the river Thames (that is, the inhabitants of by far the greatest part of the country now called England), were converted to Christianity. It is equally evident that for some time they acknowledged subjection to the ecclesiastical government of the Scots, and that the only reason why they lost their influence was that their missionaries chose rather to give up their charges than to submit to the prevailing influence of the Church of Rome, to which the Saxons of the west and of Kent had subjected themselves." The primitive Christianity of England, therefore, like that of the world, was at first Presbyterian, the hierarchy only coming in afterwards amidst the other corruptions of Popery, and being continued in England when cast off by all the other Churches of the Reformation solely on political grounds. Not only so, but the Church of Scotland was the mother Church, from which the ministers of England originally derived their orders and authority as am-

* Bishop and presbyter at first meant the same thing.