

Our Contributors.

CONCERNING SOLID MEN.

BY KNOXOVIAN.

Solid men are not valued as highly in this age and country as they should be. Too many people crave for the odd, the startling, the amusing, the sensational. They want something that will make a noise, however useless and brief the noise may be. Solid men are seldom noisy, and hence it is that they do not come up to the requirements of people who think that man's chief end is to advertise and shout.

By a solid man we mean one who has moral firmness, fixed principles, strength of character, courage—a man that does not stand on the street corner and look in every direction to see what way the crowd is going on every question, before he makes up his mind about the course he should pursue. A solid man has a mind of his own which he uses to do his own thinking and a conscience of his own which is not constantly used for the regulation of the conduct of his neighbours.

Solidity has some base counterfeits, as every good quality of character has. One of the most common counterfeits of solidity is flesh. A man who weighs over two hundred is generally considered a solid man. No doubt he is, so far as flesh is concerned, but he may be and sometimes is, entirely destitute of solid mental and moral qualities. If anybody ran against him in the street, or if he happened to fall on anybody, he would seem solid enough, but in any emergency, in which strength of character is needed, he might turn out nothing better than a two-hundred pound baby. We have all seen babies that weighed about two hundred pounds and very solid men that turned the scale at a little over half that figure. True solidity of character is mental and moral, not physical.

Stubbornness is another counterfeit of solidity. From sheer, downright stubbornness, a man oppresses everybody, fights against everything, and shallow people think that because he opposes everything and everybody, he is a solid man. The very reverse is generally the truth. Stubbornness is far more frequently allied with weakness, than with strength. The veriest weaklings are often the most stubborn. There is a world of difference between a man of moral firmness, a man of fixed unswerving principle, a man of courage and strong character, and a creature that is stubborn and nothing more. The highest type of man is the man who has fixed moral principles, who is firm as Gibraltar when these principles are assailed, whose courage rises with every emergency and whose strength increases with every trial. There is a world of difference between a man of that kind and the man who is merely stubborn. The one is a solid man, the other is often the reverse.

The worst counterfeit of solidity is stupidity. A densely stupid man is often mistaken for a solid man, while a man who is bright and breezy on the surface, is often suspected of not having much strength of character. The very reverse is frequently the truth. A dull, owlsh, heavy countenance is no outward and visible evidence of solidity. A stupid man can hardly ever be a solid man. The elements that make the highest type of solid men are not in him. The stuff won't make the character.

The modern craving after the sensational in preference to the solid, shows itself in many ways, and does a vast amount of harm in many directions. Its highest development is the feature in the American character, which Barnum declared made so many Americans like to be humbugged. Barnum is a standing authority on humbug. We see the same miserable weakness at work among ourselves every day. We see it in the sick man who sends a hundred miles for

some well-advertised quack medicine, when the doctor on the next street to whom he perhaps owes a large bill, could do him far more good. We see it in the bald-headed and youthful rounders who leave their own place of worship and run after escaped nuns, ex-priests, and advertised people, who have a petent process for converting sinners. We see it in the people who send all over creation for some article of goods that they can buy on the business street of their own town.

There is room for discussion, as to whether many of the long vacancies in Presbyterian churches, are not caused mainly, or at least in part, by people who crave for something sensational, or at least, unusual, from a distance. The solid men of our congregations have no such craving, but unfortunately the solid men who do most of the work and pay most of the bill, do not always have their own way.

In another direction, the craving for that which is startling and sensational, does untold mischief. Weak, notoriety, loving characters, see that solid qualities are belittled and disparaged and that there is a premium on the startling, the unusual, the sensational, and they are tempted to bid for notoriety. Some of them bid high.

Let sensible people remember that the country has been made what it is by solid men, that positions of trust and responsibility are given to solid men, that the stability of everything in Church and State worth maintaining, is maintained by solid men. Should the day ever come when light weights, sensational fools and noisy scapegraces occupy the chief places in Church and State, both Church and State will go to the dogs on the double quick. Moral: Give thanks every day for the services of solid men.

A CONSECRATED YOUNG LIFE.

PART II.

THE STUDENT AND THE MISSIONARY.

It was while prosecuting his business training in Manchester, that David Sandeman's heart first earnestly turned to the Christian ministry. He had no disinclination for mercantile pursuits, nor did he suppose that they could not be made available for the glory of the Lord; but he felt that the Christian ministry, like the angelic host, "wait to serve," and that what to others can be but an occasional joy belongs always to them to speak to souls that are thirsting for it, whether they know it or not, the message of reconciliation and power. On leaving Manchester, to begin his studies, he thus sums up his thoughts: "I find new opportunities every day at the warehouse of speaking a word in season. The longer there, the more such seem to open. I will leave the profession, deeply convinced of the many opportunities afforded the merchant, if he has the true wish of glorifying the Lord. Yet is the ministry more honourable, and still more opportunities are found in it."

In passing from Manchester to Edinburgh, David Sandeman entered into a new circle of life and duty. Business was henceforth exchanged for study, a life of action for one of thought. Knowledge and faith are not twin growths. The hour that lights the student's lamp has often obscured the Christian's faith. But amidst the attractions of new studies and the distractions of college life, we shall find his heart still fixed. Writing in the throng of college duties, he can still say, "Though my time is at present much engrossed by study, being engaged to day from half-past seven a.m., till ten at night, yet the Lord showed me that He is able to keep my heart in peace with Him; for often during my studies, I was able to lift up my soul in calm resting upon Him. . . . Let me ever remember not to begin the business of any class till I have prayed to the Lord to keep me, and to bless to me what I learn while there." With such student habits, it is not wonderful that there was no perceptible abatement of spirit-

ual life during the years of his college course. He was not the less prayerful, simple-minded, practical believer, when he studied at Edinburgh than when he cast up accounts or turned over bales of cotton in the Manchester warehouse. The secret of his sustained, simple, ardent faith amidst studies in which not a few have made shipwreck and more have for a season been chilled into religious indifference, is to be found in his rule, "To study all day in the presence of Jesus." In his note-book he has penned in large letters Eternity! Eternity! adding, "Let me act more as if I were now in the next world, looking back to see how I should have acted for the glory of Jesus."

With what fervour for service would our young ministers come forth from their preparatory work, were the rule of David Sandeman inscribed on every study wall as the constant rule of the student, "To study all day in the presence of Jesus."

Amidst the varieties of studies in contact with which his college life brings him, the Word has still in all things the pre-eminence. Among other lights it is not obscured: it holds its place as his bright and morning star. Is a new year ushered in? his resolution is, "A good portion of the best of my time to be devoted to secret prayer, and to a close and constant reading, and to deep and prayerful meditation and study of the Holy Scriptures." Is he tossed during a sleepless night? he rises, strikes a light, and fills his soul with "thoughts of God from God's own Word and then lies down again." When he returns from his class to his lodgings, it is to spend his first half hour with the Word. Has Sabbath come round? It brings with it its evenings spent in reading the Old Testament in the Hebrew, "that grand, beloved language." Is he a wanderer amidst the picturesque scenes of his own Perthshire Highlands? whilst he fills his soul with the grandeur of Glen Tilt, as a fit companion to it, the Word is in his hands, and his pen records, "Can read nothing but the Word; it is my morning, noon and night portion." Is he watchful to catch from his intercourse with others, hints that may turn to his personal profit? He catches, as the utterance of his own spirit, the petition from the lips of a friend, and adopts it as his own. "Cast me into the mould of Thy Word."

For five or six years he had cherished the desire to join the mission in China. As often as the purpose was laid aside it came back as a side rushing in full force. It was not worldly considerations that made him hesitate. It was the cry of the masses of home heathenism that for a time made him uncertain what was his Master's call. A less devoted man might, in his circumstances, have easily found an excuse for personally declining foreign service. He had wealth to do his missionary work by proxy, if he could have believed that His work could have been so done. The agent for China was at his command, and the means for his support; but nothing would satisfy him short of personal consecration to the missionary cause. Once the way the Lord would have him go became clear, there was no staggering in his purpose. It was sealed with those decisive words: "Surely my whole soul closes with my Master's call."

The beginning of 1857 found him at Amoy, day and night intent on acquiring the Chinese language. In the month of May he is already trying his new powers, sitting with a Chinese father and his three sons under the shade of a spreading tree, attempting to say a little about Christ. In February of the following year, he ventured to speak for the first time to about a dozen Chinamen in the village. Meanwhile whilst devoting himself to the language, he visits the Seaman's Hospital and watches opportunities of speaking to sailors of British and American ships. He narrowly watches the effects on society, British and Chinese, of the coolie and

opium traffic, and, as he writes home, denounces the opium trade as the shame of England and the antagonist of missions.

It is an irksome task, with all necessary means at hand, to learn a difficult language. But the end with our devoted missionary, smoothes the roughness of the way, and makes the toil as nothing, as he pleasantly tells us in his beautiful application to himself of the experience of Jacob: "As his time seemed short because of the love he bore to Rachel, my months pass sweetly, and quickly over, because of the love of the divine Master." But the instrument he is so diligent in acquiring, and to attain which he counts all toil pleasure, it is not the will of the Master that he should use for his glory. Enough; like David, he has prepared the materials for a temple. The Lord has need of him "up higher."

An attack of cholera, which lasted only twenty hours, called him, at the close of a busy week to his rest. Though sudden, the summons was neither unexpected or startling. When asked by a friend what, at that moment, gave him confidence, his characteristic reply was, "From head to foot, righteousness." This answer gives the secret of David Sandeman's spiritual power. His appropriation of Christ was like his consecration to Christ; it was complete. Why don't young Christians see that it is their right and their duty to take a whole Christ and all His benefits as their own inalienable possession? Less than this will leave them weak-kneed in Christ's service, even if they should be wholehearted. Full appropriation and entire consecration. "My Beloved is mine and I am His." Then there shall be "much fruit."

To the question, if he had any message for friends, "Yes," was his answer. "Tell my mother I thought of her because she taught me the way to Jesus." Happy mother to be so comforted by a dying son. But for one thing he still cleaved to life. When asked if he still wished to live for the sake of preaching the Gospel to the Chinese, he exclaimed, "Aye, that is it!" But devoted length of days, he offered what he could, and devoted his property to the Chinese mission. Confirming on his death-bed, an arrangement he had made before leaving home he bequeathed "one-eighth of his property to the spread of the Gospel at home, and seven-eighths to the spread of the Gospel in China." He died as he lived, calling nothing his own, a genuine example, in life and in death, of real consecration.

I thank God for the influence David Sandeman's story has had upon my own life. In transcribing it this morning, I have gladly felt that that influence is as fresh and strong as it was thirty years ago. May He, who richly blessed it to one young Christian, make it a blessing now to many more, "to the praise of the glory of His grace." ANNA ROSS.

Brucefield, Ont., Oct. 2nd, 1893.

NOTES BY THE WAY.

BY REV. JOHN BURTON, D.D.

The town of Windsor, N.S., is prettily situated on the Avon, where it mingles its waters with those of the Bay of Fundy. The beauty added to a landscape by a stretch of water can here be readily studied. Stand upon one of the many points of rising ground when the tide (which here rises and falls some forty feet), is out, and the panorama of hill and valley, woodland and field, is marred by an uneven stretch of shining mud flats, with here and there a pool of slimy water, and an uneven stream of similar appearance, tortuously running through an uncertain channel. The tide flows, and the scene is changed. A full stream, on whose surface the mirrored clouds and sky shed their changing hues, whose ripples laugh back the sun light, fills the wide channel with freshness and glory.